United Nations A/71/409–S/2016/816

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 31
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the publication of the MH17 Joint Investigation Team's preliminary results (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

16-16855 (E) 031016

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the publication of the MH17 Joint Investigation Team's preliminary results

28 September 2016

Today, a Joint Investigation Team composed of representatives of Ukraine, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Australia and Belgium presented the preliminary results of the criminal investigation into the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17.

The publication of this information is an important milestone towards our ultimate common goal: bringing to justice all those responsible for downing the aircraft. It is our moral duty to the 298 victims and their relatives and friends.

It is important to underline that the preliminary results of the criminal investigation have confirmed the findings of the technical report published last October by the Dutch Safety Board, namely, that the crash was caused by the explosion of a warhead launched from a "Buk" anti-aircraft missile system.

All other possible causes of this horrible tragedy were considered and rejected during the course of the criminal investigation. This puts an end to all of Russia's attempts to discredit activities of the Joint Investigation Team and conclusions by spreading distorted or fabricated information.

Today's report also includes a new and very important element: information about the route of the weapon, via which it was transported to Ukraine from Russia and then moved in the opposite direction through a sector of the Ukrainian-Russian border controlled only by Russia and its militants.

This information once again points to the direct involvement of the State-aggressor in downing the aircraft. An investigation into specific suspects' affiliation and place in the chain of command is ongoing in order to submit the cases to the appropriate court in the near future.

Of course, the most effective method of prosecution would be to establish an international tribunal under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council. Despite broad international support for this idea, Russia was the only country to veto a resolution on the establishment of such a mechanism in the United Nations Security Council. In this regard, the States involved in the investigation continue to work to identify the mechanism through which those responsible for the catastrophe will be brought to account.

Ukraine and the four other countries concerned will continue to provide full support to the Joint Investigation Team and do everything possible to facilitate the criminal investigation.

Successful completion of the investigation requires the continued support and cooperation of the countries, as provided for in United Nations Security Council resolution 2166 (2014).

We call on all countries to cooperate with the criminal investigation. We expect that Russia, under pressure from the international community, will finally begin to fulfil United Nations Security Council resolution 2166 (2014) as well as its international obligations.

United Nations S/2016/817

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 27 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, and with reference to the letter dated 14 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/786), I wish to bring the following to your attention:

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly rejects the pure fabrications and unsubstantiated allegations contained in the aforementioned letter concerning the alleged transfer of weapons to Yemeni Ansarullah fighters and the violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

That letter and the claims contained therein are at the same time quite astounding, as the claimant is the representative of a Government that has invaded Yemen and used, for about a year and a half, a full variety of lethal weapons against Yemen's civilians and civilian infrastructure. Numerous reports, by the United Nations and other authoritative institutions, have so far documented the crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition against Yemeni civilians, especially children and women, as well as the coalition's engagement in violating international law and international humanitarian law, including Security Council resolution 2286 (2016).

According to the latest survey conducted by human rights activists and academics, Saudi Arabia targeted 3,158 non-military sites in Yemen between March 2015 and the end of August 2016. The findings further reveal that there were 942 air raids on residential areas, 114 on markets, 34 on mosques, 147 on schools, 26 on universities and 378 on transport sites during the same period.[1]

The air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition yesterday, 26 September 2016, on a Yemeni hospital supported by Doctors without Borders, during which at least 11 people were killed and 19 injured, are the latest in a series of ceaseless attacks on civilian targets in Yemen. The bombing of a school in northern Yemen, on 13 August 2016, is another example, during which 10 children died and 28 were injured.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always reiterated that there could be no military solution to this war and has urged for an end to hostilities and a peaceful

[1] *The Guardian*, 23 September 2016.

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resolution of this conflict through negotiations and the utilization of peaceful mechanisms.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2016/818

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations on the allegations by Amnesty International on the use of chemical weapons in Darfur (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Omer Dahab Fadl **Mohamed**
Permanent Representative

16-16870 (E) 041016

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations on the allegations by Amnesty International on the use of chemical weapons in Darfur

1. The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations is surprised at the report of Amnesty International and the timing of the release of the report, which comes at the time of the official declaration, nationally and regionally, of the end of the conflict in Darfur that erupted in 2003. The people of the Sudan celebrated the conclusion of the tenure of the Darfur Regional Authority, which was mandated in 2011 with the implementation of the Doha Peace Agreement. The report, utterly unfounded, is released at a time when the Government of the Sudan is engaged with all partners and concerned countries to take more strides in the normalization of relations in all aspects.

2. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, deployed in the region since 2007, comprises 17,500 troops and personnel to monitor all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the entire region of Darfur. So far during 2016, it has submitted around five reports to the Security Council of the United Nations, none of which include a single reference to the allegations which Amnesty International has yet to clarify.

3. Likewise, the Special Envoys to the Sudan from almost every corner of the world, including the Special Envoy of the United States of America, have enjoyed unfettered access to all areas in Darfur to date.

4. The Sudan has been a party to the International Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction since 1998. The Sudan is by no means in possession of any type of chemical weapons. The industrial facilities of the Sudan, military and civil, are all open to the verification of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at all times.

5. The allegations of the use of chemical weapons by the Sudanese Armed Forces are baseless and fabricated. The ultimate objective of such wild accusations is to stir confusion with regard to the ongoing processes aimed at deepening peace and stability and enhancing economic development and social cohesion in the Sudan.

6. It is also worthy of mention that, in 1998, the Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum was bombed and completely destroyed on the basis of inaccurate and false intelligence. Later on, the Government of the Sudan was eventually cleared and the owner of the factory compensated. Such serious and unfounded accusations are damaging and should be ignored.

United Nations S/2016/819

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2295 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report on a quarterly basis on its implementation, focusing on progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it.

II. Major political developments

A. Implementation of the peace agreement

2. The signatory parties have taken important steps towards the implementation of the peace agreement, including the conclusion of an arrangement aimed at paving the way for the establishment of interim administrations. However, significant challenges remain in advancing political and security measures owing to the continued mistrust among the signatory parties. Progress in the gradual restoration of State authority in the north, the cantonment of combatants and the further integration of armed groups into national security mechanisms remained limited.

Political and institutional measures

3. Referring to the decree on the interim administrations signed on 18 May, the signatory armed groups suspended their participation in the subcommittee on political and institutional matters of the Agreement Monitoring Committee on 20 May. The groups criticized the Government for, inter alia, taking unilateral decisions on the decree. Subsequently, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Ramtane Lamamra, spearheaded consultations with the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) and the Platform to resolve the impasse. On 31 May, CMA and the Platform coalition of armed groups issued a statement in Algiers, calling for the rapid establishment of interim administrations, and signed a memorandum of understanding ("protocole d'entente") to strengthen their coordination on security, political and administrative matters. On 15 June, Mahamadou Diagouraga was appointed as the High Representative of the President for the implementation of the peace agreement. His office replaced the national committee for the coordination of the implementation of the peace agreement.

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4. Meanwhile, on 19 June, the Malian parties reached an agreement on the modalities for the establishment of the interim administrations in the five northern regions. The ceremony was attended by the Secretary-General of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), Bilal Ag Acherif, who travelled to Bamako for the first time in six years. Algeria and MINUSMA played a major role in facilitating his visit.

5. In spite of the above-mentioned progress, during the reporting period, there was an increase in tensions between CMA and the Platform over the control of Kidal, which had been latent since the Anéfis talks of October 2015 and the subsequent entry into Kidal of the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs imghad et alliés (GATIA), which is part of the Platform, in February 2016. On 6 June, the Platform denounced what it considered to be an inequitable division of power in Kidal between CMA and the Platform, to which CMA reacted by stating that CMA remained in charge of the management of the town. On 14 July, representatives of CMA and the Platform held discussions in Niamey, at the invitation of the Government of the Niger, to address outstanding political and security issues between them. On 17 July, an agreement was reached by the two groups on the joint management of Kidal and other measures to reduce tensions.

6. However, on 19 July, shooting erupted between CMA and the Platform in Kidal, resulting in the deaths of a combatant from each group and a civilian. On 21 July, CMA and the Platform clashed again in Kidal, resulting in the deaths of at least 14 people and the injuring of 89 others, including both combatants and civilians. The fighting continued through 22 July. In a statement issued on 21 July, MINUSMA condemned the violation of the ceasefire, called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and announced its intention to conduct an investigation as soon as the security situation permitted. My Special Representative for Mali used his good offices to engage with the leadership of the armed groups and called for calm through a message broadcast on the MINUSMA radio station, Radio Mikado. He also convened a meeting of the international mediation team, who agreed that the issue should be addressed in the framework of the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

7. On 25 July, the Agreement Monitoring Committee held its 10th meeting in Bamako, with representatives of both CMA and the Platform present. The armed groups reiterated the need for the urgent establishment of interim administrations wherever possible. The Government announced that resources had been allocated for the interim administrations and urged CMA and the Platform to swiftly nominate their candidates for appointment. The parties agreed to, inter alia, adjust the timeline for the establishment of the interim administrations in the light of the fighting in Kidal and create an ad hoc committee to accelerate the operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanism and of the mixed patrols starting in the Gao region. On that same day, my Special Representative facilitated the return of a GATIA leader from Niamey to Bamako and his subsequent meetings with government officials in order to appease the tensions in Kidal.

8. On 30 July, fighting broke out again between CMA and the Platform in the vicinity of Touzik, approximately 35 kilometres (km) south-east of Kidal, resulting in five combatants killed on each side, three CMA combatants injured and four combatants captured by the Platform. The situation escalated further on 9 August, when fighting erupted once more between CMA and the Platform near Adjlal, 70 km

north-east of Kidal, and Touzik despite a suspension of hostilities agreed by the Technical Commission on Security on 2 August. The clash resulted in 7 CMA combatants killed, 32 others injured and 5 others abducted by GATIA. At least 1 combatant from the Platform was killed and 10 others injured. Both parties issued press statements on 9 August blaming each other for the resumption of hostilities, which ended on 10 August.

9. On 12 August, CMA and the Platform began talks in Bamako under the auspices of High Representative Diagouraga, in collaboration with my Special Representative, the Government of Algeria, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the European Union. The talks were aimed at reaching agreements on: (a) a cessation of hostilities and security arrangements; (b) peaceful coexistence and inclusivity; and (c) acceleration of the implementation of the peace agreement. However, no consensus was reached on any of the issues. As a means to de-escalate tensions, at its meeting held on 25 August, the Technical Commission on Security decided that the mixed units foreseen for Gao would be deployed to Kidal and would begin mixed patrols on October. On 16 September, 16 GATIA combatants attacked a CMA checkpoint at In Tachdait, 90 km north-west of Kidal in the Kidal region, killing at least four CMA combatants. On 18 September, the Platform reportedly took over and occupied a CMA position in In-Khalil, 110 km north of Tessalit in the Kidal region.

10. During the reporting period, and as requested by the parties, MINUSMA provided financial and logistical support for tripartite communication campaigns by Malian stakeholders, to sensitize the public on the interim administrations and the special security measures, including the mixed patrols, in 10 out of 11 regions, with the exception of Kidal, given the recurrence of conflict between the parties.

11. Preparations for the upcoming elections have advanced. On 28 June, the Government announced that the regional and local elections would be held during the first quarter of 2017, the presidential election in July 2018 and legislative elections in November 2018. On 4 July, the Government began the review of the 1992 constitution, with technical assistance from MINUSMA. On 10 August, the Government convened the electoral college for the communal elections, which were first planned for 25 September but subsequently postponed to 20 November. The mandate of communal authorities had expired in 2014, but had been extended by several decrees. Following this announcement, opposition parties and a number of civil society organizations expressed concerns about the challenges facing the planned elections in the north, given the lack of interim administrations, the weak presence of State authority, persistent insecurity and the difficulty in including refugees and displaced persons. To ease tensions, my Special Representative facilitated meetings between the Government and the opposition parties and underlined the importance of dialogue, transparency and inclusiveness. On 9 September, the Parliament adopted the new electoral law. The law provides for, inter alia, a minimum of 30 per cent of female candidates in the lists.

12. On 12 and 13 July, over 500 people, mostly youth, protested in Gao against the establishment of the interim administrations and the exclusion of non-combatants from the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. At least 3 individuals were killed and 46 injured during the demonstrations, as a result of the use of force by the Malian defence and security forces. Other

demonstrations were held in Bamako, on 14 July and 17 August, and in Timbuktu, on 17 July.

13. The restoration of State authority in the north continued to face challenges. Since my most recent report (S/2016/498), there has been a 2 per cent decrease (from 35 to 33 per cent) in the number of State officials deployed to the northern regions. During the reporting period, the Governor of Ménaka and Taoudenni took up his functions, and as at 20 September, the Governors of Gao, Ménaka, Mopti and Timbuktu were performing their duties in their respective regions, while the Governor of Taoudenni was based in Timbuktu and the Governor of Kidal had yet to deploy owing to security challenges. On 20 June, the National Assembly approved a draft law on the supplementary budget and allocated approximately $3.4 million for the operationalization of State functions in the Ménaka and Taoudenni regions. MINUSMA implemented rehabilitation projects in the areas of rule of law (justice and corrections), defence and security, national reconciliation and social cohesion, as well as logistics in the Ménaka region.

14. In the Gao region, all three prefects and 12 sub-prefects had resumed duties in the urban centres of Ansongo, Bourem and Gao. In the Ménaka region, one out of four prefects and four out of nine sub-prefects were present. In the Mopti region, seven out of eight prefects were in place, whereas only 33 out of 55 sub-prefects were present. In the Timbuktu region, three out of five prefects and 17 out of 31 sub-prefects were deployed. There was no government presence in the regions of Kidal and Taoudenni.

15. On 18 May, 10 additional commissioners, including two women and five members of the signatory armed groups, were appointed to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, increasing the number of its commissioners to 25. The deployment of the Commission's personnel to the field and opening of its six regional offices had not yet commenced.

16. On 2 August, MINUSMA supported the organization by the Supreme Islamic Council of Mali and the Ministry of National Reconciliation of a national forum on the peace agreement, which brought together religious leaders from all faiths. The forum urged the Government to ensure that the national conference on understanding would be as inclusive as possible in order to achieve national reconciliation.

Defence and security measures

17. The redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces to the northern regions remained dependent on their ability to acquire equipment and receive training. MINUSMA and the forces developed a joint plan, in line with the human rights due diligence policy, for MINUSMA support to the Malian armed forces in the areas of training, logistics, intelligence and operational coordination. Moreover, in support of the redeployment of the Malian police, gendarmerie and National Guards to the north, the MINUSMA police component strengthened its posture in the centre and north of Mali through the deployment of a formed police unit in Gao and 25 additional individual police officers in Ansongo (Gao region), Douentza (Mopti region), Goundam (Timbuktu region) and Ménaka. In strict compliance with the human rights due diligence policy, MINUSMA conducted seven risk assessments for support provided to the Malian armed forces, gendarmerie and police, as well as to the Operational Coordination Mechanism.

18. On 18 August, a month after the attack on their base in Nampala (as described in para. 28), the Malian armed forces requested MINUSMA to help upgrade the protection of their bases, provide air support and conduct joint patrols. In Leré (Timbuktu region), MINUSMA proposed that the Malian armed forces co-locate their soldiers in the MINUSMA camp to facilitate their operations and provide better force protection.

19. Military observers conducted 159 patrols in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions and reported violations of the ceasefire in Tabagoud (Timbuktu region) on 27 June, in Atila (Timbuktu region) on 12 July, in Kidal on 21 and 22 July and 2 August, and in the vicinity of Adjlal and Touzik on 30 July and 9 and 10 August. However, no ceasefire violation has been recognized by the Technical Commission on Security since September 2015. There has been an increase in the establishment of checkpoints and military bases by the signatory armed groups, especially in the Timbuktu region, where the number of checkpoints increased from 32 to 48.

20. The Malian parties continued to make progress on the issue of interim security measures. At the meeting of the ad hoc committee to accelerate the operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, held on 25 and 26 July, the Government agreed to make equipment, including uniforms and vehicles, available. On 20 September, at the meeting of the subcommittee on defence and security matters of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, CMA designated 200 combatants who would join the first mixed patrol in Gao on 20 October. The combatants were expected to undergo the special disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

21. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process did not commence during the reporting period. Progress continued to be made on the building of the remaining five out of eight cantonment sites in Ber (Timbuktu region), Ilouk, Tabankort and Tin Fatimata (Gao region) and Tessalit (Kidal region). All locations are expected to be operational by October. To date, neither CMA nor the Platform have provided lists of the combatants to begin the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. In partnership with local non-governmental organizations and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), MINUSMA is implementing 44 community violence reduction projects directly reaching 30,000 community members, especially youth, around cantonment sites. The Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security in Mali funded a resiliency programme for women and youth in the Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, reaching more than 1,350 youth. MINUSMA provided technical support to the ad hoc working group on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which comprised representatives of the Government, CMA, the Platform and the World Bank and sought to finalize the draft national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. On 21 September, CMA provided the lists of nominees for the national commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on integration, as well as for the National Council for Security Sector Reform.

22. MINUSMA continued to support the Government on security sector reform. The Mission provided material and technical support for the establishment of the National Council for Security Sector Reform. However, the Council is not yet operational. MINUSMA, IOM and Mali's bilateral partners continued to support the National Directorate of Border Management in the Ministry of Territorial Administration in its task of finalizing the review of the national border policy. In

coordination with the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali, MINUSMA worked closely with the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection to finalize the internal security programming law. On 9 June, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita signed a decree establishing the institutional framework for security sector reform, which was an important step forward in reviving efforts to reform and reconstitute the Malian defence and security forces.

B. Other political developments

23. On 7 July, President Keita reshuffled his cabinet for the fifth time, increasing the number of ministers from 32 to 34, including 8 women. The new appointments included a member of CMA and a member of the Platform. On 29 August, President Keita designated Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, former Minister of Defence, as the new Secretary General of the Presidency with the rank of minister. On 3 September, the Minister of Defence and Veterans was replaced by the Minister of Territorial Administration. The portfolio of territorial administration was merged with that of the Minister of Decentralization and Reform of the State.

C. Regional cooperation

24. On 31 May, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, visited Mali as part of a tour of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) aimed at reaffirming the United Nations engagement at the regional level and discussing the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel with the countries concerned and subregional actors. The Malian authorities called for enhanced coordination of international efforts in support of the Sahel and support for the G-5 Sahel. On 26 July, the Government launched the activities of the National Committee for the Coordination of G-5 Sahel Actions in Mali. The Committee's permanent secretariat coordinates activities and monitors the implementation of the G-5 Sahel road map, with a focus on sustainable development and the fight against terrorism and organized crime. My Special Representative for Mali travelled to the Niger on 25 July, Algeria on 25 and 26 August and Mauritania on 5 and 6 September to discuss regional support for Mali and MINUSMA.

25. In July, the United Nations participated, along with other bilateral and multilateral partners, in an African Union-led technical assessment mission to Mali to help develop regional options to address terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahelo-Saharan region. The mission made a number of recommendations to enhance security and stability through political, reconciliation and confidence-building initiatives, the enhancement of the capacity of MINUSMA, the strengthening of Malian security institutions, the reinforcement of existing regional structures and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation in the area of security, and the establishment of an intervention force.

III. Major security developments

26. The slow implementation of the peace agreement continued to fuel the volatile security situation in central and northern Mali, which in turn further obstructed

progress on its implementation. During the reporting period, there were persistent attacks against the Malian and international forces, the resumption of armed confrontation between CMA and the Platform and increased intercommunal violence.

A. Asymmetric attacks

27. During the reporting period, there was a significant increase in attacks against the Malian defence and security forces and MINUSMA, with 39 attacks perpetrated against the Malian forces, 27 attacks against MINUSMA and one attack against a MINUSMA contractor, compared to nine attacks against the Malian forces and 15 attacks against MINUSMA in the previous reporting period. A total of 13 peacekeepers and five MINUSMA contractors were killed, and 32 peacekeepers and five MINUSMA contractors injured, compared to six killed (five peacekeepers and a contractor) and 11 personnel injured in the previous reporting period. A total of 52 soldiers of the Malian armed forces were killed, and 72 others injured, in attacks.

28. The attacks have become increasingly frequent, bold and well coordinated. On 19 July, assailants on 18 vehicles and several motorbikes attacked a camp of the Malian armed forces and checkpoints in Nampala, in the Ségou region, killing 15 soldiers and injuring 34 others. Assailants set fire to the camp and checkpoints after having looted them. On 31 July, the National Assembly extended the state of emergency, first declared on 21 November 2015, until 29 March 2017. On 3 August, Ansar Eddine released a video of five Malian soldiers abducted during the attack. On 9 and 10 August, the bodies of five soldiers reported missing during the attack on 7 August on a convoy of the Malian armed forces in Ténenkou (Mopti region) were found.

29. Meanwhile, on 29 May, five peacekeepers were killed in an attack against a MINUSMA military convoy 25 km north-west of Mopti. On 31 May, one peacekeeper was killed and five peacekeepers and eight civilian staff injured in a complex attack against the Sector East headquarters in Gao. Between 5 and 7 August, MINUSMA vehicles hit roadside bombs on three separate instances, two near Kidal camp and another 11 km south of Aguelhok, resulting in the death of a peacekeeper and the injury of five others. Ansar Eddine claimed responsibility for the attack on 7 August. In addition to complex attacks using rockets, mortars, improvised explosive devices and mines, two attacks were perpetrated against MINUSMA using remote controlled explosive devices in the Kidal region. Such devices had previously been used mostly in the Gao region. The highest incidents of attacks using improvised explosive devices have occurred along the Douentza-Gossi and Gao-Anéfis axes.

30. The signatory armed groups were also targeted by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in the Timbuktu region. On 21 July, four MNLA combatants, including the spokesperson in Ber (Timbuktu region), were found dead after having been abducted the previous day. On 29 June, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb allegedly killed the local commander of the High Council for the Unity of Azawad, part of CMA, in Ber.

31. In May, Malian and French forces launched seven counter-terrorism operations in the Goundam (Timbuktu region) and Ménaka sectors, resulting in the arrest of

35 suspected terrorists. On 22 May, Mali and the Niger conducted a joint cross-border counter-terrorism operation in Andéramboukane (Ménaka region).

32. In line with its new mandate, MINUSMA adopted a more proactive and robust operational approach, within the means available. Operation Medica, carried out in mid-August, was one such example, during which MINUSMA carried out area and axis control along the main supply routes from Timbuktu to Douentza (Mopti region) and Gossi (Timbuktu region) with the aim of identifying and arresting terrorists. MINUSMA also conducted four operations to neutralize threats, targeting improvised explosive devices, in particular in the Mopti, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. MINUSMA continued to carry out coordinated patrols with the Malian armed forces and with French forces.

33. MINUSMA continued to provide assistance to the Government in operationalizing the specialized unit on terrorism and transnational organized crime, including by providing assistance in the establishment of a specialized investigative brigade and in training 35 personnel of the Malian defence and security forces on countering suicide bombings. In coordination with partners, MINUSMA supported the Government in drafting a national counter-terrorism strategy. The Mission also provided technical and strategic support to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture in its efforts to prevent violent extremism and the radicalization of youth.

34. From 5 to 9 September, during a visit to Mali, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, held consultations with the Government on the next phase of the Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism Initiative and on priority projects proposed by Task Force entities as a result of strategic gaps identified in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the country. The aim was to provide an "All-of-UN" integrated, coherent and coordinated technical assistance framework for counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, taking into account the priorities of the Government and ensuring that there would be no duplication of efforts.

B. Protection of civilians

35. The major physical threats to civilians noted during the reporting period include armed banditry; targeted attacks by armed elements, often due to political dynamics; civil unrest; intercommunal violence, often due to land disputes; mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war; and attacks by violent extremists, terrorists and State actors. In response to such threats and to prevent attacks against civilians, MINUSMA continued to carry out medium- and long-range patrols in the northern regions, while United Nations police focused their patrols on urban areas. MINUSMA also enhanced early warning mechanisms, including through community liaison assistants and humanitarian actors.

36. Intercommunal clashes increased in central regions. On 25 June, 18 civilians were killed and 44 injured in violence between the Bambara and Markas communities in the Djenné circle, in the Mopti region. Between 26 August and 3 September, six civilians were killed and nine others injured in the Mopti region as a result of clashes between members of the Bambara and Fulani communities. In support of the Government, MINUSMA has helped to calm the situation, including by facilitating intercommunal dialogue.

37. During the clashes on 21 and 22 July in Kidal, MINUSMA responded swiftly and robustly to place themselves between CMA and the Platform. MINUSMA flew two attack helicopters from Gao to Kidal as a show of force and deployed unmanned aerial systems and two military utility helicopters for enhanced monitoring. On 23 July, MINUSMA established checkpoints in Kidal and started conducting foot patrols to discourage fighting among the armed groups and to protect civilians. When fighting in the vicinity of Kidal town also broke out, MINUSMA assumed a deterrent posture and created a safe haven in close proximity to its camp in the event that civilians should seek protection. A total of 13 civilians sought refuge in the camp, and the Mission relocated 10 civilians to Gao. The fighting in late July in Kidal between the signatory armed groups led to the deaths of seven civilians.

38. On 2 September, unidentified armed assailants attacked Boni, 80 km east of Douentza, in the Mopti region, and briefly occupied the town. The assailants torched the mayor's office and the gendarmerie commander's house and abducted a deputy mayor. On 3 September, MINUSMA deployed a detachment of a battalion from Douentza to conduct patrols and monitor the situation in Boni with the support of attack helicopters. The peacekeepers stayed in the town for four nights and conducted zone control in close coordination with the Malian armed forces.

39. At the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, held in London on 7 and 8 September, the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award was awarded to Major Aichatou Ousmane Issaka (Niger) who had been in Sector East since 2015. The award seeks to recognize the efforts of a peacekeeper who has promoted the principles of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Major Issaka had reached out to women in the local community and joined what would have otherwise been all-male patrols, making them more approachable for women and children.

C. Mine action, weapons and small arms

40. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to educate conflict-affected communities in central and northern Mali about explosive hazards, reaching 34,961 people, and destroyed 84 explosive remnants of war. As part of capacity-building assistance to the Malian authorities, MINUSMA trained 315 personnel of the Malian defence and security forces on the mitigation of explosive threats. MINUSMA also constructed a weapons and ammunition storage facility and refurbished 11 others.

IV. Human rights

41. MINUSMA documented 117 cases of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law involving 202 victims, including 23 children, compared with 96 cases involving at least 131 victims in the previous reporting period. The cases involved 19 instances of executions or attempted killings; 18 instances of ill-treatment or torture; 15 instances of illegal detention, involving 31 individuals; 22 instances of extortion or looting; 10 direct attacks against humanitarian or peacekeeping personnel; four instances of abduction; four instances of the recruitment of child soldiers, involving nine children; two instances of sexual

violence; one instance of the military use of a hospital; one instance of forced displacement; and 21 instances of lack of due process as a result of ineffective investigations. Among these abuses, serious abuses, including killings and illegal taxation, were reportedly committed by elements deployed to newly erected checkpoints and military bases by the signatory armed groups, especially in the Timbuktu region. Government forces, CMA, the Platform and other armed groups remained the primary alleged perpetrators, mostly in the northern and central parts of Mali. The human rights investigation conducted by MINUSMA in the aftermath of the fighting in the Kidal region confirmed two instances of arbitrary execution/killing, four cases of physical abuse, one case of abduction, two cases of looting, three cases of ill-treatment and one case of an occupation of a hospital. Dozens of civilians were also forcefully displaced.

42. MINUSMA verified that at least nine children were associated with the Platform, which is part of GATIA, in the Kidal region. Three others were reported among the ranks of CMA, the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad and the Mouvement populaire pour le salut de l'Azawad in the Timbuktu region. On 29 July, MINUSMA coordinated the transfer of four children associated with GATIA in Kidal to Bamako and, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund, handed them over to the National Directorate for the Promotion of Children and Families. However, on 4 August, the Directorate handed them over to a member of Parliament with ties to GATIA, in violation of the standard protocol for the care of children associated with armed groups. The Mission called on armed groups to prevent any further recruitment of children and urged the signatory parties to take concrete steps to reduce the impact of conflict on children. For instance, the United Nations provided assistance to MNLA on the action plan to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and sexual violence against children. On 30 June, the Platform signed a statement committing to fight conflict-related sexual violence in Mali and ratified a one-year implementation plan to tackle this challenge.

43. During the reporting period, a total of 106 individuals (of whom four were presumed minors) were arrested for terrorism-related activities in the central and northern regions: 66 by the Malian defence and security forces; 36 by international forces; and 4 by MINUSMA. Of those arrested, 3 were tortured by the Malian defence and security forces and 2 by MINUSMA; 36 were illegally detained by the Malian defence and security forces or French forces; and 1 was killed by MINUSMA. A United Nations board of inquiry has conducted an investigation into the cases involving MINUSMA. Corrective measures will be implemented following the completion of the investigation. Excessive use of force by the Malian defence and security forces was reported during counter-terrorism operations.

44. As at 20 September, MINUSMA had identified 224 conflict-related detainees, including those detained for terrorism-related charges held in State-run detention facilities. Among the detainees were six minors. During the reporting period, the authorities released 81 people for various reasons, including lack of evidence and trial.

45. The illegal detention of individuals by armed groups continued. Since my most recent report, 13 additional individuals were detained by CMA, the Platform, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and others, bringing the total to 27 (14 combatants and 13 alleged civilians).

46. Limited progress was made in combating impunity for serious violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence committed in 2012. MINUSMA held 13 human rights trainings for the Malian armed forces, police, gendarmerie and legal authorities, in collaboration with the European Union Training Mission in Mali and United Nations police. In total, over 1,050 State representatives participated in the trainings, including 118 women. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights launched 12 investigations into alleged human rights violations as a result of monthly meetings with MINUSMA aimed at reviewing and addressing human rights violations documented by the Mission.

47. Effective 1 July, the specialized protection functions of the Child Protection Unit and the Office of the Senior Women's Protection Advisor were consolidated within the human rights component of MINUSMA.

V. Humanitarian situation

48. The humanitarian situation in Mali remained volatile. In the lean season (June to September), more than 3 million people, or 16 per cent of the Malian population, were food insecure, including approximately 420,000 who needed immediate food assistance. At the end of the academic year in June, 296 out of 2,380 schools remained closed in the crisis-affected regions of Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu. A total of seven schools remained occupied by the signatory armed groups in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. Ténenkou, in the Mopti region, remained the most affected, with 69 per cent of schools closed.

49. The delivery of humanitarian assistance in northern and central Mali was constrained during the reporting period, compared to the previous reporting period, owing to the impact of the rainy season on roads, an increase in criminal assaults against humanitarian workers and the deterioration of the security situation in the Kidal region. As at 20 September, 18 security incidents involving humanitarian actors had been reported, compared to 11 such incidents in the previous reporting period. On 6 June, a warehouse containing a one-month supply of food rations pre-positioned by humanitarian actors for 11,000 people was looted in Kidal. Furthermore, contamination by explosive hazards, including explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and mines, in the northern and central regions continued to restrict humanitarian and civilian access. The continuous closure of the airfield in Kidal added to the access challenges. MINUSMA provided humanitarian actors with helicopter flights between Gao and Kidal to the extent possible.

50. Despite challenging conditions, humanitarian actors continued to operate in the crisis-affected regions, against the backdrop of the limited provision of basic social services by the Government. Humanitarian actors supported the Government in providing food to approximately 420,000 people in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions and facilitated education on explosive hazards in conflict-affected communities in central and northern Mali. Humanitarian organizations provided cash assistance and non-food items to returnees. They also supported income-generating agricultural activities to assist the returnees with reintegration into their communities and promote peaceful coexistence between returnees and host community members in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions. Humanitarian actors continuously urged armed groups to enhance humanitarian access and respect for humanitarian principles.

51. The fighting in the Kidal region in July and August led to the forced displacement of civilians. Since my most recent report, the number of internally displaced persons decreased by 25 per cent, to approximately 39,000, while approximately 134,000 Malian refugees remained in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger.

52. In July, seasonal flooding caused 13 deaths, destroyed 1,500 houses and affected approximately 10,000 people in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Koulikoro, Ménaka, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso and Timbuktu, according to government figures. Humanitarian partners supported the Government in distributing relief items.

53. As at 20 September, only $101 million of the total of $354 million for the humanitarian response plan for 2016 had been financed.

VI. Economic development and cultural preservation

54. The return of basic services to the north continued to be hampered by insecurity, limited progress in the return of State authority and the slow operationalization of the Malian regional development agencies. Despite these difficulties, United Nations agencies continued their efforts in support of development and the peace process. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided technical expertise and financial support to the steering committee set up by the Government to develop the national strategy for the prevention of and response to violent extremism and terrorism. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations initiated a programme of livelihood support to 2,500 vulnerable agro-pastoralist households, who were mostly displaced people and returnees in the new region of Ménaka. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team allocated the full amount of $4 million available over 2015-2016 to quick-impact projects, which led to the launch of 107 projects targeting more than 290,000 direct beneficiaries in the northern regions by 30 June. Quick-impact projects contributed to building confidence in the Mission's mandate and the peace process, including by demonstrating the early dividends of security and stability to the population. Over the reporting period, the Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security in Mali funded an additional 16 projects, reaching 225,469 people in the north, thanks to 11 donors.

55. The Peacebuilding Fund disbursed 100 per cent of its $10.9 million in earmarked funds through projects and joint programmes implemented by the United Nations country team in the Gao and Timbuktu regions with a view to fostering peacebuilding efforts. The projects enabled 3,856 children, including 1,768 girls, to attend school and set up 650 income-generating activities for internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees. Another project improved access to justice and security for 460 women affected by gender-based violence. From 17 to 22 July, a joint mission by UNDP and the Peacebuilding Support Office visited the Liptako-Gourma region, including Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, from 4 to 9 September, to assess the viability of a cross-border peacebuilding programme benefiting communities in the three countries.

56. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team ensured a more efficient division of tasks and complementarity of efforts through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Plus for 2015-2019, which facilitated an integrated response and division of tasks according to the comparative advantages

of MINUSMA and each agency. Over the reporting period, the Government approved the Framework Plus workplan for 2016. The early recovery cluster has also fostered an integrated approach among UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and MINUSMA, on the basis of a mapping exercise of interventions in the north. In addition, the programme criticality assessment for the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions and for parts of the Mopti and Ségou regions was approved on 6 September, after a process led by the United Nations Children's Fund and with the active participation of the United Nations country team and MINUSMA.

57. On 23 June, MINUSMA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization provided logistical support for the delivery of information technology equipment and furniture to nine private libraries of ancient manuscripts in Timbuktu. On 28 June, the first of three phases was completed in the rehabilitation of the three mosques designated as world heritage sites in Timbuktu. On 27 September, the International Criminal Court sentenced Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, a member of Ansar Eddine, to nine years' imprisonment. Al Faqi Al Mahdi, who surrendered to the Court on 26 September 2015, pled guilty to the charge of war crimes related to intentionally directing attacks against Muslim shrines and mausoleums in Timbuktu in 2012.

VII. Deployment and capacities

Military

58. As at 20 September, the strength of the military component of MINUSMA stood at 10,635 personnel, or 80 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289. Women accounted for 1.6 per cent of the force. Key outstanding capabilities included a combat convoy battalion, an armed helicopter unit for Sector North, an additional special forces company for Sector West, additional infantry companies and specialist training, mentoring and equipment for the disposal of explosive ordnance. MINUSMA urgently required an attack helicopter unit and a military medium utility helicopter unit, as those currently in Sector East would be repatriated in early 2017. A replacement of one military medium-utility helicopter unit in Sector West was also needed by the end of 2016. MINUSMA remained underresourced in terms of armoured personnel carriers. Even with the deployment to the Mission of 27 additional armoured personnel carriers, MINUSMA would be 38 armoured personnel carriers short of the number originally planned. In addition, the new mandate included a requirement for an additional 77 armoured personnel carriers.

Police

59. As at 20 September, the strength of the police component of MINUSMA stood at 1,274 personnel, or 66 per cent of its authorized strength of 1,920, with 78 per cent of individual police officers (14 per cent of them women) and 63 per cent of formed police unit personnel (4.5 per cent of them women) deployed. MINUSMA continued to require four formed police units, 11 additional armoured personnel carriers to meet the required standards, a small section of riverine police capacity and additional specialized police personnel, including experts in forensics,

improvised explosive devices, intelligence, transnational organized crime, the trafficking of illicit drugs, small arms and light weapons and counter-terrorism.

Civilian personnel

60. As at 20 September, 85 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 85 per cent of international staff, 86 per cent of United Nations volunteers and 80 per cent of national staff. Women occupied 28 per cent of the international posts, 28 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 20 per cent of national staff posts. From 7 to 14 July, a civilian staffing review was conducted in order to adjust the Mission's staffing according to the tasks to be carried out under the new mandate. The review concluded that MINUSMA should strengthen its mission support capacity, refocus its civilian capacity towards the implementation of the peace agreement and the support to national institutions as they redeploy to the north, enhance its coordination and cooperation with the United Nations country team and foster its engagement with regional stakeholders and mechanisms.

Camp construction and securing supply routes

61. Harsh climatic conditions, an unstable security environment and a lack of required ground and air transportation infrastructure continue to limit the capacity of MINUSMA to sustain stable supply routes. MINUSMA plans to establish a new major logistics hub in Gao to better serve all MINUSMA locations in northern Mali. Negotiations with Algeria, Benin and the Niger are ongoing with a view to opening supply routes to Mali.

62. MINUSMA completed its relocation to the operational base on 30 June and to its new headquarters on 31 August.

Safety, security and welfare of Mission personnel

63. In response to of the significant security threat in Mali, MINUSMA continued to upgrade and strengthen the defence infrastructure of all existing camps, including by reinforcing its facilities against blasts and installing protected command positions and bunkers. In high-risk areas, the Mission improved living conditions for civilian and uniformed personnel. On 6 July, the tethered aerostat for surveillance deployed in Kidal was determined to not be viable, given volatile weather conditions and the costs of maintenance under such conditions. MINUSMA and Headquarters were engaged in discussions to identify an alternative technical option to the aerostat capabilities.

64. MINUSMA implemented several pilot projects using surveillance and early warning technology to improve the intelligence-gathering capacity of the Mission and to prevent attacks. In Gao and Timbuktu, only 8 unmanned aerial vehicles out of the 38 deployed to the Mission could be used to provide short- and medium-range surveillance, owing to the limited number of ground control stations. To address these shortcomings, the Mission acquired in June one unmanned aerial system with a range of 600 km, which was subsequently deployed to Timbuktu. Another two, one of which would be used as a spare, would be operational by October.

VIII. Conduct and discipline

65. In June, one allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse involving a military staff member was reported. This case and another allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse received in January involving a military staff member remain under investigation by the United Nations. The results of the investigations will be communicated to the troop-contributing countries for appropriate follow-up actions, as required. The case that was reported in December 2015 is now closed, and the individual is barred from participation in future peacekeeping operations. MINUSMA continued its prevention activities, including outreach activities informing the public about the expected standard of conduct for United Nations personnel, especially the policy on zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, guidelines from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on sexual exploitation and abuse were disseminated.

IX. Observations

66. I commend the signatory parties of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali for continuing to make progress in its implementation. I welcome in that regard the continued commitment of President Keita and his Government to supporting the peace process, including through the appointment of Mahamadou Diagouraga as his High Representative for the implementation of the peace agreement. I applaud his efforts, together with my Special Representative and the international mediation team, to de-escalate tensions between the signatory armed groups.

67. I welcome the signing, on 19 June 2016, by the Government of Mali, CMA and the Platform, of the agreement that defined the modalities for the establishment of interim administrations in the five northern regions. The long-awaited agreement was a positive step in addressing the priority demand of the signatory armed groups and move forward with other provisions of the peace agreement. I also acknowledge the progress made towards the operationalization of security arrangements contained in the peace agreement, including the Operational Coordination Mechanism, which paved the way for the launch of the mixed patrols in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. At this critical juncture, I call on the signatory parties to redouble their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the agreement, and, more specifically, I call on the armed groups to submit the lists of combatants expected to join the cantonment process without further delay. The nomination of Platform representatives to the interim administrations and the designation of CMA combatants to mixed patrols was a first step towards achieving tangible results on the ground.

68. The reporting period was marred by the resumption of hostilities between the signatory armed groups in July, August and September in the Kidal region. I strongly condemn these ceasefire violations and call on the Security Council to consider imposing sanctions against the parties violating the peace agreement. The clashes stalled the implementation of the peace agreement at the critical phase of establishing the interim administrations, obstructing the parties from implementing their commitments made in the agreement. The signatory armed groups must decisively recommit to the peace process and the implementation of the peace agreement. I urge the concerned parties to resolve their differences through the

mechanisms envisaged by the peace agreement and agree to a formal cessation of hostilities.

69. For the peace process to advance in earnest, it is critical that the Malian parties adhere in good faith to the peace agreement and commit themselves to achieving key priorities, including the progressive redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces and re-establishment of State authority throughout the country. The United Nations, through MINUSMA, will continue to support the parties in their efforts to restore State authority in the north. In this context, I reiterate the call made by the Security Council in its resolution 2295 (2016) for the Government to define, in consultation with the other signatories and with the support of MINUSMA and regional and international stakeholders, clear benchmarks and timelines for the implementation of the peace agreement.

70. I welcome the announcement of the upcoming elections in Mali. The elections have the potential to facilitate the redeployment of State administrative functions to the north. I cali on the Government to achieve consensus on the holding of the elections and ensure the inclusiveness and transparency thereof. In conjunction, I urge the Government to accelerate the preparations for the national conference on understanding, which is expected to facilitate national reconciliation, help to address the root causes of the conflict in Mali and generate consensus on the way forward. I call on the Government to ensure a wide consultation process for the conference, involving all concerned stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth.

71. Moving forward, a successful cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process constitutes a prerequisite for peace in Mali. It is critical that the signatory armed groups demonstrate their will to pursue such a process by taking decisive actions, including by designating the participants in the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. I welcome the recent appointment of CMA representatives to the national commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on integration, as well as to the National Council for Security Sector Reform. I call on the Government to accelerate the process for the adoption of a national strategy designed to reform the security sector and to combine the law on military programming and the draft legislation on national security into a programming law on defence and security.

72. I remain concerned by the human rights situation throughout the country. I strongly condemn the abuses committed against the civilian population during the recent clashes in the Kidal region. I impress upon the signatory armed groups that these human rights violations are unacceptable. I am concerned about the increasing establishment of checkpoints and military bases by signatory armed groups and their affiliates, particularly in the Timbuktu region, and human rights violations against civilians reported around these outposts. I am also concerned about the excessive use of force by the Malian defence and security forces during counter-terrorism operations. Such violations play right into the hands of terrorists. I urge all concerned parties to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as their obligations under the peace agreement. I denounce the increase in intracommunal and intercommunal violence in the northern and central regions, which constitute obstacles to national reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation. In this regard, I urge the Government to accelerate the

opening of the regional offices of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission in order to begin documenting abuses and violations.

73. I am extremely concerned by the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in certain regions of Mali and by the great number of schools that remain closed in the regions affected by crisis. I condemn the attacks and robberies perpetrated against humanitarian actors, including the pillaging of the World Food Programme warehouse in Kidal. I call on all Malian parties to help facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need. I commend the humanitarian actors for continuing to support the Government in the provision of basic social services to the people in need in an extremely challenging environment.

74. The attacks against the Malian, French and MINUSMA forces have increased and become more sophisticated and complex. These attacks are absolutely unacceptable and constitute serious violations of international law. I express my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the Governments of all those who have lost their lives. The ever-growing number of attacks in the central regions is a source of great concern. I urge the Malian parties to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the peace agreement concerning social cohesion in order to address the grievances of the population and halt the spread of violent extremism. The scale of the violent extremist and terrorist attacks in Mali require a united response by the international community — otherwise, there is a risk that the situation could deteriorate and spread. I urge Member States to reinforce international cooperation, in particular cooperation among the countries of the region. I fully support the efforts by MINUSMA to engage with the other countries of the G-5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger, and with other neighbouring countries, to deploy the liaison officers requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2295 (2016). MINUSMA stands ready to integrate the liaison officers in its headquarters in order to strengthen cooperation on border security issues and intelligence-sharing.

75. The reinforcement of the posture and capacities of MINUSMA and the compliance of all parties with their obligations under the peace agreement is expected to allow MINUSMA to effectively support the Government of Mali and its people in the protection of civilians and the promotion of sustainable peace, stability and development in Mali. In order for MINUSMA to be able to implement its mandated tasks, it is indispensable that the Mission be provided with the necessary equipment. If no helicopters are deployed to replace the departing units, MINUSMA will lack two utility helicopter units (eight medium utility helicopters) and two armed helicopter units (six attack helicopters) out of the required three utility helicopter units (12 helicopters) and three armed helicopter units (nine helicopters) by early 2017. The lack of those helicopters will have a negative impact on the operational performance of the Mission owing to a diminished mobility and capacity to conduct casualty and medical evacuations. MINUSMA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are identifying mechanisms and modalities to deploy armoured personnel carriers, the rapid intervention force from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, surveillance, reconnaissance and information companies, and specialized combat battalions for the protection of convoys. I urge members of the Security Council and the international partners of Mali to increase their support to ensure that these outstanding needs and capacity gaps are swiftly addressed, including through bilateral support to the troop-contributing countries of MINUSMA. Without such urgent support, the Mission will be seriously

handicapped in carrying out its mandate, and the confidence that the signatory parties and the population have in the Mission will suffer.

76. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his tireless efforts in advancing the peace process. I commend the members of the international mediation team for their sustained support to the Malian parties. I also pay tribute to the men and women of MINUSMA and to the troop- and police-contributing countries for their dedication to the Mission. I express my gratitude to the African Union, the Economic Community for Western African States, the European Union, bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners, who spared no effort to contribute to peace and security in Mali under very difficult conditions.

Annex

Military and police strength of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali as at 31 August 2016

	Military component			*Police component*								
	(staff officers and units)			*Individual police officers*			*Formed police units*			*Total police*		
Country	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
Albania												
Algeria												
Argentina												
Armenia												
Australia												
Austria	6		6									
Bangladesh	1 417		1 417				136		136	136		136
Belgium	7		7									
Benin	260		260	36	1	37	140		140	176	1	177
Bhutan	3		3									
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)												
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		2									
Botswana												
Brazil												
Brunei Darussalam												
Bulgaria												
Burkina Faso	1 692	29	1 721	19	1	20	133	7	140	152	8	160
Burundi				14		14				14		14
Cambodia	291	10	301									
Cameroon	3		3	15		15				15		15
Canada												
Central African Republic												
Chad	1 443		1 443	5	4	9				5	4	9
Chile												
China	382	15	397									
Colombia												
Congo												
Côte d'Ivoire	6		6									
Croatia												
Cyprus												
Czechia	25		25									

	Military component			Police component								
	(staff officers and units)			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
Country	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Democratic Republic of the Congo				5	1	6				5	1	6
Denmark	46	1	47	6		6				6		6
Djibouti										1		1
Dominica												
Dominican Republic												
Ecuador												
Egypt	67		67	5		5				5		5
El Salvador	88	4	92									
Estonia	9		9									
Ethiopia	1		1									
Fiji												
Finland	5		5									
France	24	2	26	9		9				9		9
Gabon												
Gambia	5		5									
Germany	251		251	13	2	15				13	2	15
Ghana	217		217									
Greece												
Grenada												
Guatemala												
Guinea	855	6	861	7	3	10				7	3	10
Guinea-Bissau	1		1									
Honduras												
Hungary												
Iceland												
India												
Indonesia	143	4	147									
Ireland												
Israel												
Italy	1		1									
Jamaica												
Japan												
Jordan	1		1	1		1				1		1
Kazakhstan												
Kenya	3	4	7									
Kyrgyzstan												
Latvia	1		1									

	Military component			Police component								
	(staff officers and units)			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
Country	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Lesotho												
Liberia	43	2	45									
Libya												
Lithuania	1		1									
Luxembourg												
Madagascar				2		2				2		2
Malawi												
Malaysia												
Mauritania	4		4									
Mongolia												
Montenegro												
Morocco												
Mozambique												
Namibia												
Nepal	145	4	149									
Netherlands	297	18	315	20	2	22				20	2	22
New Zealand												
Niger	855	6	861	13	14	27				13	14	27
Nigeria	69	13	82	2		2	108	31	139	110	31	141
Norway	62	9	71									
Pakistan												
Palau												
Papua New Guinea												
Paraguay												
Peru												
Philippines												
Poland												
Portugal	2		2									
Qatar												
Republic of Korea												
Republic of Moldova												
Romania	1		1	4		4				4		4
Russian Federation												
Rwanda												
Samoa												
Senegal	569	10	579	14	1	15	269	9	278	283	10	293
Serbia												
Sierra Leone	7		7									

	Military component			Police component								
	(staff officers and units)			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
Country	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Singapore												
Slovakia												
Slovenia												
South Africa												
Spain												
Sri Lanka												
Sweden	193	16	209	5	4	9				5	4	9
Switzerland	8		8	2		2				2		2
Tajikistan												
Thailand												
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia												
Timor-Leste												
Togo	922	15	937	3		3	135	5	140	138	5	143
Tunisia				46	1	47				46	1	47
Turkey				2		2				2		2
Uganda												
Ukraine												
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2		2									
United Republic of Tanzania												
United States of America	10		10									
Uruguay												
Vanuatu												
Yemen	6		6	9		9				9		9
Zambia												
Zimbabwe												
Total	**10 452**	**168**	**10 620**	**257**	**34**	**291**	**921**	**52**	**973**	**1 178**	**86**	**1 264**

Map No. 4606 Rev. 15 UNITED NATIONS
September 2016 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2016/820

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 September 2016

Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 29 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to the letters that I had previously sent to you, the most recent of which was dated 17 September 2016 and issued as document S/2016/790, I should like to inform you that the so-called international coalition led by the United States of America continues to attack the Syrian Arab Republic and to target vital service facilities and infrastructure under the pretext that it is waging war on Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In that connection, the air forces of the coalition bombed two main bridges that span the Euphrates River in the Dayr al-Zawr countryside. The "coalition" air raids, which were aimed at fragmenting the Dayr al-Zawr countryside along the banks of the Euphrates, resulted in the destruction of the Mayadin bridge and then, hours later, the Asharah bridge in the eastern countryside.

The deliberate destruction of those bridges by the United States of America was part of a series of attacks that came on the heels of the blatant American aggression that killed and injured dozens of Syrian Arab Army personnel in Dayr al-Zawr on 17 September 2016. This action also serves to confirm that the methodology of the "coalition" is founded on the bombardment and destruction of Syrian infrastructure, economic facilities and social institutions. Such attacks have occurred repeatedly, and we have informed the Secretary-General and successive Presidents of the Security Council of them in many official identical letters.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the operations of the so-called international coalition are illegal because it was established outside the framework of international law, in contravention of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and without prior coordination and complete cooperation with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Government furthermore reiterates that citing Article 51 of the Charter to justify the establishment of the coalition and its operations is a distortion of the principles of the Charter and constitutes an attempt to exploit its provisions in order to achieve the political aims of specific States.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls for the condemnation of those criminal acts of aggression and reiterates that the only beneficiaries of the attacks by the "international coalition" are extremist terrorist groups, notably ISIL and the Nusrah Front. Those groups are striving to spread chaos and destruction

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throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, and events have proven that the United States of America and its allies are not serious about combating them.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic therefore calls on the Security Council to condemn this attack and compel the members of the "international coalition" to halt the deliberate destruction of infrastructure in Syria and to respect international law and Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism, all of which stress that counter-terrorism measures must be in line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2016/821

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 October 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the thirty-first report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/796):

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the positions that it has previously communicated in its identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council responding to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic believes that, like previous reports, the current report has failed to achieve its presumed goal, which is to review the humanitarian situation in Syria and enhance efforts to address it. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regrets that, in drafting the report, the Secretariat has strayed from its mandate. Indeed, the Secretariat is using these reports to mislead global public opinion about the true reasons why the humanitarian situation for Syrians is deteriorating. The report is also being used to level accusations against the Syrian Government and disparage the tremendous efforts that it is making to provide Syrians with basic services and support, combat terrorism and restore security and stability in all the regions and cities of Syria and thereby facilitate the rapid return of internally displaced person to their homes, so that they can resume their normal lives, and improve the humanitarian situation for Syrians in general. The Secretariat has also failed to meet the minimum standard of credibility, impartiality and objectivity in drafting the report and has continued to espouse the hostile position towards Syria adopted by certain influential States on the Security Council. Indeed, the Secretariat has continued to provide cover for the governments and organizations that have strived to exacerbate and prolong the crisis in Syria, supported terrorism, profited from the suffering of Syrians both within and outside the country, and hindered efforts to achieve a political solution based on intra-Syrian dialogue, thereby prolonging the humanitarian, social, and economic suffering of all Syrians, and the health crisis they have been enduring.

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The Syrian Government is surprised that the Secretariat persists in reiterating the same political and legal error that it had made previously by describing, in paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 11, the armed terrorist groups as the non-State armed opposition, although the Secretariat is aware that those groups comprise Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Front for the Conquest of the Levant (the Nusrah Front), which are included in the Security Council list of individuals and entities associated with the ISIL and Al-Qaida terrorist organizations, as well as numerous, variously named, terrorist groups that are ideologically, financially and logistically linked to the two latter terrorist organizations. Syrian society has rejected the barbaric, extremist thinking of those groups, their poisonous ideologies and their brutal and inhumane practices. The Syrian Government also regrets that the Secretariat has failed to respond to our previous queries regarding the international legal basis for referring to organizations that are included in the Security Council list of individuals, entities and terrorist groups linked with the ISIL and Al-Qaida, and which constitute the backbone of the so-called Army of Conquest in Idlib and Aleppo, as the non-State armed opposition.

The Syrian Government has cooperated fully with the United Nations to support the humanitarian response efforts aimed at meeting the needs of Syrians under the present circumstances; the Government has provided all possible assistance, the lion's share of financial support for humanitarian operations and documented information on the key obstacles impeding the successful implementation of that response. Nonetheless, the Secretariat has refused to acknowledge the role played by the Syrian Government, ignored the factual information that we have provided it and relied on information sources that are misleading, politicized and biased against the Government. Some of those sources are directly linked to armed organizations and foreign intelligence services. The Secretariat has used the current report to tarnish the image of the Syrian Government on the world stage and to accuse it of responding inadequately to the humanitarian situation. The Syrian Government is therefore compelled to reiterate its demand that the Secretariat must correct the reports on the humanitarian situation in Syria that it submits monthly to the Security Council. The Secretariat must adopt a new approach to this matter, one that that is based on professionalism and objectivity. It is also important for the Secretariat to designate staff members who are better trained, more professional and objective, and not hostile towards Syria to oversee the drafting of these reports. The Syrian Government hopes that future reports will adhere to standards of professionalism, impartiality and objectivity.

It is regrettable that the Secretariat has worsened the humanitarian situation in Syria, instead of improving it. This is so because the Secretariat's current report, like its predecessors, contains a vast amount of exaggerated, politicized and misleading information, and fails to meet the minimum standards of professionalism, accuracy and objectivity.

Following is the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding certain aspects of the current report of the Secretariat:

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic deplores the disregard displayed by the Secretariat and those who drafted the report of the constitutional and legal right of the Government under international law to defend its people from terrorism, and particularly acts terrorism perpetrated by ISIL, the Nusrah Front and

associated terrorist organizations, and its right to purge armed terrorist groups from Aleppo governorate, where it is seeking to end the years of suffering that the governorate's people have endured owing to the presence of armed terrorist groups. The Government is striving to end the siege of Aleppo governorate and stop armed terrorist groups from using civilians as human shields and perpetrating brutal terrorist crimes against civilians. The Syrian Government notes that the measures it has taken in Aleppo governorate are directed against terrorists, not "non-State armed opposition groups". Those measures comply fully with international law and international humanitarian law, and operations have steered clear of populated areas and civilian or service facilities. The Syrian Government, in cooperation with its allies, has also opened humanitarian corridors to help civilians leave neighbourhoods in which terrorists are present and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the neighbourhoods of Aleppo. The Syrian Government regrets that Secretariat officials have failed to gather available information on the thousands of civilians who have been targeted by armed terrorist groups using gas cylinder "hell canon" missiles, or the civilians who have been targeted by terrorist sniper fire and gunfire while trying to use those crossings to move to safe neighbourhoods where there are no armed terrorist groups. Moreover, the Secretariat failed to note the recent attack by armed terrorist groups against a relief convoy organized by the United Nations and its partners that was heading to the Urum al-Kubra district.

With regard to the situation in Aleppo Governorate, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic underscores that it had complied fully with the cessation of hostilities called for in the agreement concluded by the Russian Federation and the United States of America. On the other hand, the armed terrorist groups continued to violate the cessation of hostilities; they and their supporters are responsible for the failure to implement the agreement and the resumption of hostilities. Violations by armed terrorist groups of the cessation of hostilities agreement have caused the deaths of more than 200 innocent civilians and more than 187 Syrian Arab Army soldiers.

2. The Syrian Government rejects the Secretariat's deliberate refusal to acknowledge that the successful delivery of humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations and international organizations to both stable and unstable areas, most recently in August 2016, would not have been successful without the assistance, cooperation and facilities provided the Syrian Government.

3. The Syrian Government deplores the manner in which the Secretariat addresses the events that took place in Darayya on 26 and 27 August 2016. The Government underscores that it liberated the people of Darayya from armed terrorist groups, which had used them as human shields. Civilians from Darayya were transferred to shelters where they are receiving the care and assistance they need. They will return home once repairs to their houses and key service facilities had been completed and the mines and explosives planted by the departing terrorists have been removed. The Syrian Government rejects the Secretariat's description of the Darayya terrorists, who fired hundreds of mortars indiscriminately at the inhabitants of Damascus and killed dozens of people, including children and women, as the non-State armed opposition. Perhaps the clearest evidence that those individuals should be described as terrorists is the fact that, as soon as they reached Idlib governorate, those individuals joined the Nusrah Front and other armed terrorist

groups and took part in armed attacks carried out by those terrorist groups against civilians in the villages and towns in the Hama countryside. It is a matter of deep regret that United Nations representatives in Syria deliberately exaggerated the number of civilians in Darayya, claiming that there were more than 4,000 in the town, when in fact there were only 492. Meanwhile, United Nations assistance was reaching armed groups there; this is something that is occurring in many parts of Syria.

4. The Syrian Government regrets that the Secretariat has continued to depend on unreliable and biased information sources whose aim is to provide misleading information and deliberately tarnish the image of the Syrian Government. Meanwhile, the Secretariat continues to ignore reports that focus on the crimes committed by terrorists and the Governments that are financing the terrorists and facilitating their passage into Syrian territory so that they can perpetrate massacres and exacerbate the humanitarian plight of Syrians. Perhaps the worst example of this is the reliance of the Secretariat on speculative and biased reports and information issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the reports of which have proven, time and again, to be lacking in objectivity, neutrality and credibility.

5. The Syrian Government deplores the failure of the Secretariat to state explicitly that ISIL and the Nusrah Front are terrorist organizations, and the failure of the Security Council, as yet, to characterize the Front for the Conquest of the Levant, the successor of the Nusrah Front, as a terrorist organization.

6. The Syrian Government regrets the attempts of the Secretariat to whitewash and promote the operations carried out by the so-called international coalition led by the United States of America. It furthermore regrets the wilful omission of any reference to the civilian casualties and massive infrastructure damage caused by the aerial bombardment, including, in particular, the targeting of power plants and electricity transmission and storage infrastructure in Aleppo, as well as well as economic and oil installations. At the same time, the Secretariat's refusal to acknowledge the efforts of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and its allies to combat terrorism, in accordance with Security Council Resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations is both disgraceful and unacceptable, and merely serves to demonstrate the malice and bias of the report's authors. How can a United Nations report ignore the killing of dozens of civilians in a raid carried out by French aircraft in the north of Syria?

In that connection, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic condemns the passivity of the Secretariat in addressing the violations perpetrated by aircraft belonging to the so-called international coalition, despite the fact that the Syrian Government has provided the Secretary-General with numerous lists documenting the impact of the operations of this "alliance", its targeting of economic infrastructure and Syrian civilians, and its recent deliberate, brutal and criminal attack against Syrian Arab Army soldiers who were fighting the terrorist ISIL organization in Dayr al-Zawr governorate and defending the inhabitants of that governorate from the atrocities of ISIL. Following that attack, ISIL, with the knowledge of and in coordination with the Americans, occupied Syrian Arab Army positions.

7. The Syrian Government stresses that paragraph 8 of the report demonstrates most clearly the unbalanced and contradictory approach of the

Secretariat to the situation in Syria, whether in respect of the insistence on using a term (non-State armed opposition) that is not a legal term and has no basis in international law, or on using that term to describe groups that are universally designated as terrorist groups, such as the Nusrah Front and several of its terrorist allies, including Ahrar al-Sham, Army of Islam and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki movement. The Syrian Government condemns the failure of the Secretariat and the governments that claim to be concerned about the welfare of the Syrian people to condemn explicitly the attack by the "non-State armed opposition" on villages in the Hama countryside that killed and injured hundreds of civilians and displaced thousands of families from their homes and villages, as acknowledged by the Secretariat in paragraph 8.

8. The Syrian Government condemns the Secretariat's wilful and repeated disregard of the catastrophic humanitarian repercussions for Syrians of the ongoing coercive unilateral economic measures imposed by the United States of America, the European Union and other States on the most vital service sectors, such as health care, education, energy, food, water and electricity, that provide for Syrians' daily needs and strengthen their resilience. By adopting that irresponsible approach, the Secretariat has obstinately refused to acknowledge that those measures are one of the main factors exacerbating the humanitarian situation in Syria. Moreover, Secretariat's position favours those States that are violating international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and United Nations resolutions by imposing those measures against Syria.

9. The Syrian Government finds it regrettable that Secretariat continues to promote the cross-border delivery of assistance, even though it is clear that doing so is ineffective and that most of the assistance thus delivered falls into the hands of armed terrorist groups in the targeted areas. The notifications sent to the Syrian Government do not meet the minimum standard of credibility with regard to figures, data, number of beneficiaries and information on the parties that receive and distribute assistance to civilian beneficiaries. The Secretariat also continues to exaggerate the amount of assistance provided and express underserved thanks in that regard to certain Governments that are recruiting foreign terrorist mercenaries from around the world and facilitating their passage into Syria, and recruiting displaced persons in camps in neighbouring States, arming them and providing them with all support and facilitating their entry into Syria, so that they can attack the Syrian State and people and thereby serve the interests of those Governments.

In that connection, the Syrian Government reiterates that the United Nations monitoring mechanism cannot verify that cross-border assistance is reaching its rightful beneficiaries, and has thus far proven to be incapable of doing so. We remind you that the Bab al-Hawa, Bab al-Salamah and Ramtha crossings are also the entry points through which arms, materiel and ammunition are smuggled to armed terrorist groups in Syria. The Syrian Government confirms that the Syrian Arab Red Crescent stands ready to monitor the delivery of humanitarian assistance to its intended recipients, but the Secretariat has failed to respond to that proposal.

10. The Syrian Government regrets that, in speaking of the obstacles to humanitarian access, the Secretariat failed to refer to the responsibility of armed terrorist groups, described as "moderate" by some Western Governments and radical regimes in the region, for obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to

areas where those groups are prevalent or have imposed siege. To give but one example, the Secretariat has not addressed the matter of the scores of missile attacks in which armed terrorist groups deliberately targeted power plants and transformer stations in Aleppo, causing power cuts and also disrupting the city's drinking-water supply. Nor has the Secretariat mentioned the targeting of humanitarian convoys by armed terrorist groups, most recently the joint convoy carrying humanitarian assistance to the Urum al-Kubra area.

11. The Syrian Government takes exception to the Secretariat's whitewashing, in paragraph 23 of the report, of crimes committed by the armed terrorist groups present in Yarmouk camp. The Secretariat ignores the fact that those groups, including the terrorist organizations ISIL, Ahrar al-Sham and the Army of Islam, were responsible for hindering the delivery of assistance by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to Palestinian refugees displaced from Yarmouk camp to the areas of Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham, having issued a statement declaring themselves to be the only parties authorized to supervise the distribution of aid and receive the aid convoys entering those areas.

12. The Syrian Government affirms the importance and centrality of the facilitation and support that it provides to United Nations organizations and programmes. During the reporting period, numerous medical evacuations were carried out and humanitarian assistance was provided to a number of Syrian communities and towns, without distinction. In particular, several patients were evacuated from the town of Madaya in Rif Dimashq, which also received humanitarian assistance, notwithstanding any international appeal (mentioned in paragraph 17) and irrespective of the Four Towns agreement, thanks to the efforts and swift response of the Syrian Government and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to the humanitarian and health needs of the town's inhabitants.

The Syrian Government reiterates that those who are behind the armed terrorist groups besieging the towns of Fu'a and Kafraya are the main reason for the failure to reach an agreement that would finally end the suffering not only in those two towns but also in Zabadani and Madaya.

13. The Syrian Government once again condemns the Secretariat's continuing bias towards the Turkish Government to the detriment of the hundreds of thousands of Syrian civilians in Hasakah governorate who have been affected by that Government's deliberate closure of the Nusaybin border crossing and its refusal to approve United Nations requests for humanitarian assistance destined for Hasakah governorate to be brought in via that crossing. The Syrian Government reaffirms that the temporary closure of the crossing since December 2015, or almost nine months, is not for security reasons but rather for well-known political reasons. In short, it is aimed at increasing the suffering of Syrian civilians under siege in those areas by armed terrorist groups, notably ISIL, as well as by the Turkish Government.

14. The Syrian Government regrets the fact that the Secretariat continues to include in the report inaccurate or unreliable figures and statistics on the number of visa applications submitted by United Nations agencies. The correct information is that, in August, the Syrian Government approved 36 entry visa applications for staff of United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, and not 30 (as stated in

the report). The Syrian Government also approved several applications at the start of the present month of September, which will be included in its reply to the report of the Secretariat for September. As at 31 August 2016, it had approved the renewal of 85 visas, and not 44.

15. The Syrian Government finds it deplorable that the Secretariat should draw on reports of OHCHR that are neither credible nor reliable, specifically in paragraph 19, which cites alleged reports of events in Suwayda' central prison and recounts fanciful tales of what took place.

16. The report sets out information provided to the United Nations by the Syrian Government concerning the status of several of its local staff members who were arrested on charges of terrorism and cooperation with terrorists and had their cases referred to the competent courts. The Government is therefore surprised that the United Nations should refer to them as being detained.

17. The Syrian Government deplores the alarming consistency of the Secretariat's views, as set out in paragraph 9, with those of a number of Western Governments and certain regimes in the Arab Gulf region and Turkey that support terrorism, interfere in Syrian internal affairs and peddle solutions to the crisis in Syria that are conspicuously out of keeping with the aspirations and choices of the Syrian people.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its long-standing position that the country's crisis requires a political solution based on Syrian-led dialogue among Syrians, without outside interference or preconditions. It stresses that the political approach goes hand in hand with counter-terrorism efforts, which will continue until all armed terrorist groups active throughout Syria are eradicated. In that context, the Syrian Government emphasizes that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General must perform his duties and reminds the Secretariat that the success of the political process and any palpable improvement in the humanitarian situation will primarily depend on the creation of a climate conducive to a serious and non-politicized international and regional commitment to fighting terrorism in Syria and on an immediate end to the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on the Syrian people with no legal or moral basis.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its call on the Security Council to prevail on the States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to refrain from so doing, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and the financing thereof, in particular resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). Compliance with and enforcement of those resolutions is the key to resolving the situation in Syria and delivering unprecedented humanitarian assistance to those in need in Syria.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I to the identical letters dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Crimes and indiscriminate attacks committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, Ahrar al-Sham, the Army of Conquest and other armed terrorist groups and ignored by the authors of the report

- During the reporting period, attacks carried out by armed terrorist groups with, among others, mortar shells and explosive devices, killed 218 civilians, including 43 children, and injured 980 others, including 196 children.
- On 29 August 2016, armed terrorist groups bombarded neighbourhoods in Damascus and Rif Dimashq (including Bab Tuma, Mazzah, Arnus, the Harasta residential suburb and Sa'sa') with mortar shells, killing 16 civilians, including women and children, injuring scores of others, some seriously, and causing significant material damage.
- On 25 August, in the city of Aleppo, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield, located in the Rashidin, Dawwar Salah al-Din and Karam al-Jabal neighbourhoods, fired mortar shells, rockets and gas cylinder missiles at the Mogambo, Salah al-Din, Jam'iyat al-Zahra', Hamdaniyah, Furqan, Sayf al-Dawlah and Jabiriyah neighbourhoods, killing 6 persons, injuring 40 others, including women and children, and causing material damage to buildings, shops, vehicles and infrastructure.
- Likewise in Aleppo, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield, located in the Rashidin and Dawwar Salah al-Din neighbourhoods, fired mortar shells at the Khalidiyah, A'zamiyah and Salah al-Din neighbourhoods, killing 14 persons, including women and children, and causing material damage to buildings, shops, vehicles and infrastructure.
- On 25 August, armed terrorist groups fired 25 mortar shells at the Umm al-Sarj area of the city of Homs, killing a number of civilians. On the same day, other armed terrorist groups fired 14 mortar shells at the neighbourhoods of Thawrah and Harabish in Dayr al-Zawr, killing a number of civilians and injuring others.
- Numerous civilians, among them women and children, were killed and injured in all areas of the country, including as a result of landmine explosions in Hasakah, Homs, Safirah and Tall Aran in Aleppo.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 28 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Examples of humanitarian assistance delivered during August 2016 thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, in addition to the assistance provided by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, thanks to the facilitation of the Syrian Government, delivered to various governorates humanitarian food, non-food and medical assistance provided from inside Syrian territory by United Nations agencies. A total of 2,038,980 beneficiaries (407,796 families) received food parcels provided by the World Food Programme through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. The number of beneficiaries of United Nations humanitarian assistance distributed from inside Syrian territory is estimated at 3,165,512 beneficiaries (630,025 families).

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, with various forms of cooperation from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, delivered to most governorates humanitarian assistance provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross from within Syrian territory. Estimates are that 128,793 food packages were delivered to 643,965 beneficiaries, in addition to the tens of thousands of packages of canned food, other food items and kitchen supplies delivered to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent, with cooperation from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, delivered humanitarian assistance (food, non-food and medical items, water purifiers, wheelchairs and baby food) provided by United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and international non-governmental organizations in Syria. The assistance was distributed to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in the governorates of Aleppo, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Suwayda', Tartus and Ladhiqiyah.

- Between 2014 and May 2016, the total food assistance delivered to camp inhabitants by UNRWA, with the facilitation of the Syrian Government, amounted to 136,982 food parcels and 42,580 medical kits, which is in addition to the ongoing operation to provide them with non-food items, other foodstuffs and medical care. Palestinian refugees in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham are Yarmouk camp inhabitants who were displaced from the camp after it was invaded by the terrorist organization ISIL, in collusion with the terrorist Nusrah Front and other armed terrorist groups present in the camp. UNRWA has ceased to provide its assistance to inhabitants of the Yarmouk refugee camp through Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham because the armed terrorist groups inside the camp issued a statement declaring themselves to be the only parties authorized to oversee the distribution of assistance and receive aid convoys entering Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham.

United Nations S/2016/822

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2016

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the presidential statement dated 26 October 2010 (S/PRST/2010/22), in which the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to continue to submit an annual report on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). It provides updates on the status of implementation and on trends reflecting indicator data (see S/2010/498, annex). In addition, in response to paragraph 17 of Council resolution 2242 (2015), it provides follow-up on commitments and recommendations made during the 2015 high-level review on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), including recommendations contained in the previous report (S/2015/716).

2. The present report is based on data and analysis provided by entities of the United Nations system, including peace operations and country teams, and contributions from Member States, regional organizations and civil society.

II. Overview of progress and follow-up to the 2015 high-level review

3. In 2015, messages regarding conflict prevention and sustaining peace featured prominently in global efforts to confront increasingly complex threats to peace and security, from the three peace and security reviews[1] to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September.[2] Similar calls were echoed at the World Humanitarian Summit, along with themes such as inclusivity, gender equality and women's participation, strategic partnerships, people-centred approaches and the need to break down the silos between the three pillars of work of the United Nations and across entities of the United Nations system.

[1] The high-level review on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446) and the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (A/69/968-S/2015/490).

[2] Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

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4. The women and peace and security agenda is a critical, yet underutilized tool for preventing conflict and shaping more effective responses to today's complex crises. The global study conducted on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000)[3] provided evidence that women's participation contributed decisively to peace processes, justice and security, economic recovery and humanitarian assistance. The 2015 open debate of the Council to review the implementation of the resolution had 113 participating speakers, the largest number in any debate in the Council's history. The outcome of the debate, resolution 2242 (2015), was adopted unanimously, and nearly 70 Member States made explicit commitments to implement the agenda. There is momentum for change, but it is essential that support go beyond rhetoric.

5. Growing support for the agenda is contributing to tangible outcomes. More women are included in peace talks, more peace agreements contain provisions in support of women's human rights and more security sector personnel are trained to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, more countries are implementing national action plans or related strategies. There is a growing understanding of the need to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including those based on disabilities, indigenous status, sexual orientation or other factors. In order to ensure realistically that no one is left behind, inclusivity must be fully integrated into efforts to build and sustain peace.

6. Developments during the reporting period, however, show that there is also room for concern. While there have been gains, they have been achieved too frequently on an ad hoc basis. Moreover, there continues to be widespread targeting of women and girls in conflict zones and a pushback on progress with regard to women's human rights in some contexts. Initiatives to address these challenges in follow-up to the high-level review are highlighted below.

A. Implementing the women and peace and security agenda in peace processes

7. In my previous report, I called upon stakeholders to build and act on evidence, lessons and good practices gathered over the past 15 years to ensure women's meaningful participation, in particular in formal peace processes.

8. The steps taken by Colombia to facilitate the peace agreement signed between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) on 26 September 2016 illustrate how inclusion can broaden the constituency committed to peace and can help to ensure that agreement is reached. Women were directly represented and actively engaged both at the peace table in Havana, including through a subcommission on gender formed by the negotiating parties, and in national and regional consultations throughout Colombia. They constituted up to one third of peace table participants, approximately half of the participants in the consultations and over 60 per cent of the victims and experts visiting the peace table.

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[3] Radhika Coomaraswamy, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), 2015). Available from http://wps.unwomen.org/~/media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf.

9. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2261 (2016), the United Nations is setting up a special political mission in Colombia that will form part of the tripartite mechanism that monitors and verifies the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. I encourage stakeholders to ensure that the work of the mission is informed by relevant recommendations put forward by women during the peace process. I also welcome the commitment of the mission to maximizing the number of women in all functions and positions, including efforts to ensure that at least 20 per cent of the United Nations personnel deployed are women (see E/2016/729, para. 31).

10. Data on the participation of women in mediation processes[4] has shown mixed progress globally during the reporting period. In 2015, the United Nations led or co-led 14 formal mediation processes.[5] All United Nations mediation support teams included women, an accomplishment maintained since 2012. In 2015, at least one senior woman was present in the delegations of 13 negotiating parties and in 9 out of 11 active processes, compared with 4 out of 14 processes in 2011. While these figures indicate some progress, stronger efforts are still needed to facilitate women's increased and meaningful inclusion in negotiation party delegations to peace talks. Consultations with women's civil society organizations were conducted in all processes,[6] a target reached and maintained since 2014. I encourage all actors supporting mediation processes to persist in promoting women's participation, in order to ensure that commitments continue to be met in this area.

11. My Special Envoy to Syria has set an example for United Nations-led mediation processes and good offices, ensuring that women's perspectives are considered at the peace table. At each round of negotiations during the Geneva talks held in 2016, he advocated for at least 30 per cent women's representation, consulted regularly with civil society and publically called for women's participation as members of the official delegations of negotiating parties. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposition have included women representatives in their delegations, where 3 of 15 representatives (20 per cent) are women. In February 2016, the Special Envoy, advised by a diverse group of Syrian women, established the Syrian Women's Advisory Board with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The Board, comprising 12 Syrian women representatives of civil society, meets regularly with the Office of the Special Envoy to provide gender analysis and advice. Syrian women also share their perspectives with the Special Envoy through consultative platforms that engage civil society representatives from 53 Syrian networks and represent over 500 non-governmental organizations.

12. Efforts by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to promote women's participation in the Libyan political dialogue and constitutional drafting process have also been notable. These included launching a separate women's track to ensure regular consultations with activists and, in partnership with Switzerland, organizing a conference for 38 women's groups, which resulted in the development of the Libyan

[4] On an annual basis, the Department of Political Affairs reports data on the representation of women among mediators, negotiators and technical experts in formal peace processes and consultations with women civil society organizations.

[5] For three of these processes (Syrian Arab Republic, the Middle East and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) no formal negotiations were held during the reporting period.

[6] Not included in this number are the peace processes for which the scope was very limited, such as discussions on border demarcation.

women's agenda for peace. In Cyprus, the Office of the Special Adviser facilitated the work of the Committee on Gender Equality, which was established by Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders during the talks in order to find a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus issue, increasingly involving women in both negotiation teams at all levels.

13. Initiatives to promote women's participation and inclusive consultations must become standard practice in the mediation of peace agreements. The high-level seminars on gender and inclusive mediation processes, developed by the Department of Political Affairs and conducted in partnership with Finland, Norway, the Peace Research Institute Oslo and the Crisis Management Initiative, remain a key forum in which senior mediation actors can learn, share and translate commitments into practice. Between 2013 and 2015, eight seminars were organized for 164 envoys, United Nations mediators, regional organizations, Member States and international mediation organizations.

14. All actors supporting mediation efforts must uphold their commitments to supporting women's effective participation, ensuring that women are prepared and selected as mediators, as reiterated by the Security Council in its presidential statement S/PRST/2016/9. In 2015, five women held appointments as chief mediators or special envoys supporting mediation efforts or promoting good offices on my behalf. I welcome the establishment of women mediator networks in different regions, which expands the global pool of women mediators. For instance, the Nordic Women Mediator's Network was launched in 2015 to promote women peace mediators in the Nordic countries and to promote links with similar networks in other regions. The Department of Political Affairs and UN-Women updated their joint gender and mediation strategy to promote inclusive, multi-track conflict prevention and mediation processes.

15. Gender expertise is critical to ensure that peace agreements reflect women's interests. In 2015, the United Nations provided gender expertise to eight of nine (89 per cent) relevant mediation processes, an increase from 67 per cent in 2014. The United Nations standby team of mediation experts and similar initiatives by regional organizations provide support in this area. For instance, the Mediation Support Team of the European External Action Service provided technical gender advice in various processes, including Afghanistan, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic. In 2015, UN-Women deployed gender experts to the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, the Resident Coordinator in Colombia and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security.

16. The number of signed peace agreements with gender-specific provisions continues to rise.[7] This may be attributed to greater awareness by mediators, more inclusive processes and greater access to and use of gender expertise. Of 10 peace

[7] The Department of Political Affairs has tracked the inclusion of gender issues in peace agreements since 2011, and figures have been reported to the Security Council in my annual reports on women and peace and security. Information on peace agreements is available from http://peacemaker.un.org.

agreements[8] signed in 2015, 7 (70 per cent) contained gender-specific provisions, compared with 50 per cent in 2014, 54 per cent in 2013, 30 per cent in 2012 and 22 per cent in both 2011 and 2010. In 2015, conflict-related sexual violence provisions were included in the agreements reached with Colombia, Mali, Myanmar and South Sudan. The United Nations, Member States and civil society must now facilitate and monitor their implementation, ensuring that women are meaningfully involved.

17. In addition to their participation in formal high-level processes, women have long been working on processes at the local and subnational levels, often outside the spotlight of international attention. In 17 provinces of Burundi, for example, a new network of women community peace mediators initiated dialogues with political actors, security forces and civil society to avert conflicts. In Uganda, civil society groups organized a women's situation room and mediated between opposing political parties after the elections. These types of civil society initiatives require scaled-up funding and must be linked to peace mediation processes at the national level.

B. Protecting and promoting the rights and leadership of women in peacekeeping and humanitarian settings

18. The lack of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law continues to cause enormous damage. At the beginning of 2016, the number of individuals forcibly displaced as a result of conflict or generalized violence exceeded 65 million.[9] According to the Global Humanitarian Overview 2016 report prepared by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, an estimated 125 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.[10] Civilians are deliberately or indiscriminately killed or injured daily by State and non-State actors, and widespread sexual violence is a reality that destroys the very fabric of society in several settings.

19. The 2015 peace and security reviews, as well the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, conveyed the message that effective responses require a deeper understanding of the gender dimensions of conflict and that reinforced efforts were needed to protect and empower women and girls to shape responses at the local and international levels. Increased efforts were also needed to end violations of the human rights of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict settings, including the rights to bodily integrity, food, health, livelihood, education, property and nationality.

Addressing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict-affected settings

20. The recommendations set out in my most recent report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361) continue to be relevant. Through the report, I brought to the Council's attention 19 situations of concern and an updated listing of 48 parties to

[8] For the purpose of data collection, the Department of Political Affairs includes, under the term "peace agreements", cessation-of-hostilities agreements, ceasefire agreements, framework agreements and overall peace agreements signed between at least two parties to a conflict, intended to end, prevent or significantly transform a violent conflict so that it may be addressed more constructively.

[9] Data available from www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.

[10] Available from https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/GHO-2016.pdf.

conflict[11] credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict; the majority of the parties are non-State actors. I also provided information on the growing practice of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism and on emerging concerns, such as the plight of children born of wartime rape, lack of access to services and sexual violence perpetrated against men and boys. All State parties repeatedly listed in the annexes of the annual reports on children and armed conflict and on sexual violence in conflict will be prohibited from participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

21. I welcome and encourage the full implementation of joint frameworks for addressing sexual violence in conflict signed between my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict matter and a growing number of Governments and regional organizations, including most recently with the League of Arab States. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which brings together the Office of the Special Representative, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has continued to assist Governments with regard to criminal investigations and prosecutions, military justice, legislative reform, the protection of victims and witnesses, and reparations for survivors. To date, at the request of national authorities, the Team of Experts has provided technical support to combat impunity for conflict-related sexual violence in the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iraq, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and countries neighbouring the Syrian Arab Republic.

22. In my previous reports, I have underlined the need to address conflict-related sexual violence as part of a continuum of violence that is closely intertwined with broader attacks on gender equality and women's human rights. Information on both the scope and range of such violence is increasingly available, including through the coordinated monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements established by the United Nations on conflict-related sexual violence, the Gender-based Violence Information Management System, demographic and health surveys, and surveys conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the World Bank on violence against women in conflict contexts. Survey data from 38 countries has indicated elevated lifetime rates of physical violence in several conflict and post-conflict countries.[12] Because of stigmatization, fear of reprisals and limited access to relevant services, coupled with a general breakdown of the rule of law, many victims of conflict-related sexual violence do not report incidents or seek assistance.

23. Ending all forms of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, remains a priority. I encourage United Nations entities to continue to collaborate under the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network and urge Governments to deliver on commitments made under initiatives such

[11] The report should be read in conjunction with the seven previous reports on conflict-related sexual violence, which provide a cumulative basis for the inclusion of parties in the annexed list. Boko Haram is listed separately under other parties of concern. The data and analysis included in the reports inform the indicator on patterns of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

[12] For individuals 15 to 49 years of age. Data available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter6/chapter6.html.

as the Call to Action to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Emergencies, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. I reiterate the importance of women's participation in conflict and crisis response, including as members of the security sector. Such participation has been shown to improve women's access to services and to strengthen community relations.[13] I welcome initiatives such as the training provided to women military officers by UN-Women in collaboration with China, India and South Africa, to enhance opportunities for women's leadership in crisis settings.

Promoting gender-responsive protection environments in peacekeeping

24. I welcome ongoing efforts to increase the number of women among military and police personnel deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations, with the goal of doubling the number over the next five years, pursuant to Council resolution 2242 (2015). As of December 2015, women made up only 4.7 per cent of total military experts in field missions and 3.2 per cent of military troops. Women's representation among United Nations police has also remained low, at 16.9 per cent of individual police officers and only 7 per cent of formed police units.[14] Slow progress in this area is linked to low rates of women in national military and police forces.[15] Data show that women's representation rates vary widely across countries and tend to decrease at managerial levels, even in top performing countries. Through engagement with contributing countries and by prioritizing women candidates in screening processes, the Criminal Law and Judicial Advisory Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations maintained, on average, a 30 per cent deployment ratio of government-provided women corrections personnel between January and December 2015, the highest among United Nations uniformed personnel.

25. The Office of Military Affairs of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations now has a Military Gender Adviser and there are military gender advisers in many missions. The Military Gender Adviser will contribute to the inclusion of a gender perspective in documents prepared by the Military Planning Service documents and in all future concepts of operation. As of mid-2016, all nine military strategic concepts of Operation and six force operation orders included provisions related to women and peace and security. The Police Division in the Department also has a Gender Adviser and has established gender advisers in five missions, aiming to increase the number of missions to 10 by the third quarter of 2016. In 2016, 13 out of 14 (93 per cent)[16] concepts of operations make reference to either gender or sexual and gender-based violence, up from 81 per cent in 2015 and 54 per cent in 2012.

[13] See, for example, Sahana Dharmapuri, "Not just a numbers game: increasing women's participation in UN peacekeeping", Providing for Peacekeeping No. 4 (International Peace Institute, July 2013).

[14] Latest data is available from www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/gender.shtml.

[15] To monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), Member States are invited to report data annually on the indicator: "Level of women's participation in the justice and security sector". In 2015, 12 Member States reported figures on women's representation in national armed forces and 10 reported on national police institutions. The aggregate figures for these sets of countries indicate that less than 12 per cent of military personnel and only 12.3 per cent of police officers were women.

[16] Apart from the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, all police components include such references within their mandated duties and responsibilities.

26. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have made significant efforts to strengthen the accountability of senior leadership in peacekeeping to fulfilling gender equality commitments, including by having the Directors within the two Departments represented on the Task Force on Gender at Headquarters and moving the Gender Unit to the Office of the Chief of Staff, which allows for increased access to technical expertise to strengthen mainstreaming efforts. However, in order for senior managers to receive technical support, the gender expertise of all peacekeeping staff must be enhanced, and specialized training modules must be developed.

27. I expect that the inclusion of gender perspectives in all strategic reviews of peacekeeping operations will contribute to ensuring that peacekeeping operations are responding to the needs of men and women on the ground. I call on senior mission leadership to establish a regular consultation with local civil society, including women's organizations, to ensure that peace and security decisions reflect, and are more responsive to, the needs and experiences of local communities. Recommendations from these consultations should be reflected in outcome documents.

Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse

28. I remain profoundly concerned about the cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that continue to surface in countries hosting United Nations peace operations. These violations are a fundamental betrayal of trust, have devastated the lives of victims and have seriously damaged global perceptions of the Organization. The international community must do its utmost to care for and provide services to the victims, empower and support vulnerable populations and hold the perpetrators to account. This is a collective responsibility that requires the full engagement of Member States.

29. In 2015, 99 new allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse were received from across the United Nations system (including departments and offices of the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes), compared with 79 in 2014, 96 in 2013, 88 in 2012 and 102 in 2011. Detailed information on allegations received in 2015, including the nationality of military and police personnel involved and actions taken, is provided in annexes III to V to my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/70/729).[17] The majority of allegations in 2015 involved military personnel. Over 50 per cent of mission-related allegations were received from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Of the allegations reported from peace operations, 38 (55 per cent) involved the most egregious forms of sexual violence and abuse, including sexual activities with minors and rape. Paternity claims were associated with 15 allegations.

30. The increase in the number of allegations, their unspeakable brutality and the weakness of the measures to assist victims reveal that much more needs to be done.

[17] Data is regularly collected and published by the Conduct and Discipline Unit, under both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. This informs the indicator of resolution 1325 (2000) on the percentage of reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse allegedly perpetrated by uniformed, civilian peacekeepers and/or humanitarian workers that are acted upon out of the total number of referred cases.

Pursuant to the findings of the independent review of the United Nations response to the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic allegations (A/71/99), I appointed a Special Coordinator to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to prevent abuse and respond to cases in a timely manner. Earlier in 2016, I announced additional measures to strengthen accountability and assist victims, including through the establishment of a dedicated trust fund for victims, stronger and swifter investigations and disclosure of the nationality of alleged perpetrators. It is essential that donors extend support to mechanisms to assist victims, which remain severely underfunded.

Respecting the full range of obligations under international law in conflict-affected settings

31. The three peace and security reviews conducted in 2015 highlighted the centrality of a human rights-based approach for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustainable peace and the importance of working in complementarity with international human rights law to strengthen gender equality.

32. I welcome the focus of the Security Council on protecting health-care workers, the sick and the wounded and medical facilities in war zones, in line with international humanitarian law and as expressed in its resolution 2286 (2016). Attacks on workers and facilities, as well as a lack of access to health-care services, including abortion- and HIV/AIDS-related reproductive health care, have a devastating impact in conflict-affected settings. In 2015, 418 per 100,000 live births in conflict and post-conflict countries[18] resulted in maternal deaths; a ratio almost twice as large as the global ratio of 210 per 100,000 live births. The situation is particularly dire in Mali, where 882 women died per 100,000 deliveries. Similarly worrisome are the ratios of Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, all of which surpassed the 700 mark.

33. I recognize the efforts by Member States and United Nations entities to respond to violence against women and girls in conflict by providing non-discriminatory, holistic health services, including sexual and reproductive health care and psychosocial support in line with international humanitarian law. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has recently established four women-friendly health spaces in conflict-affected areas in Afghanistan, supported the Ministry of Health and partners in Iraq to provide comprehensive care, in particular to Yazidi women and girls, and launched mobile teams of psychosocial experts to assist survivors of gender-based violence, including internally displaced persons in Ukraine. UNFPA and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in collaboration with Chile and Spain Chile, have developed a curriculum aimed at building the capacity of peacebuilders to facilitate access to sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provides kits for newborns in Iraq and reproductive health services in Jordan. Switzerland has developed a programme with local partners in Burundi, eastern Democratic Republic of

[18] For the present report, this includes countries or territories in which a political, peacebuilding or peacekeeping mission operated during 2015, or concerning which the Security Council was seized and which had been considered by the Council at a formal meeting during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015, or that had received programmatic funds from the Peacebuilding Fund in 2015.

the Congo and Rwanda to provide holistic medical services, legal support and socioeconomic integration to victims of violence. The international community must continue to work in the spirit of partnership in order to ensure universal respect for the right to health, including the full range of sexual and reproductive health rights, for all women and girls.

34. Conflict limits access to education for women and girls. The gender gap in the global adjusted net enrolment rate in primary and secondary education widens significantly in conflict and post-conflict countries. Only 74 per cent of girls are enrolled in primary education, compared with 92 per cent of boys. In secondary education, the enrolment rate is 42 per cent for girls and 48 per cent for boys. Providing an even more striking comparison, a sample study of 25 conflict-affected countries and 65 countries not affected by conflict[19] identified that girls in those conflict countries were 90 per cent more likely to be out of secondary school than their non-conflict counterparts.[20] Security concerns, including the use of schools by the military, continue to have an impact on learning and jeopardize the safety of children. The implications of girls not receiving an education are significant both in the short and long term. In many crises contexts, girls are at a greater risk of being forced into domestic labour or early marriage, trafficked or made to engage in prostitution and/or transactional sex for survival.[21]

35. I am pleased that work to address statelessness has continued in earnest and I welcome the adoption in 2016 of Human Rights Council resolution 32/7, entitled "The right to a nationality: women's equal nationality rights in law and practice", in which the Council called upon all States to ensure that all persons, regardless of their nationality status, enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms and urged States to take immediate steps to reform nationality laws that discriminated against women. I encourage all actors to join the global campaign of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to end statelessness.[22]

36. I am concerned about continued threats and attacks against, and the persecution of, those who do not conform to gender norms, whether they be women political leaders, journalists or human rights defenders, women justice and security sector personnel, civil society leaders or those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic has documented how rigidly defined gender roles, harshly enforced, have removed women and girls from public life, and how the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continues to target sexual minorities for execution (see A/HRC/31/86). In Afghanistan, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) recorded the use of parallel justice structure punishments of women accused by anti-Government elements of so-called "moral crimes". In the contexts of Colombia, Iraq, Libya and the Sudan, the international community continues to learn about the killing of women human rights defenders, often because they have challenged

[19] Unweighted national averages have been used for analysis, including for seven countries in which conflict is restricted to particular areas.

[20] See www.globalpartnership.org/data-and-results/education-data.

[21] Sarah Brown, "The importance of investing in girls' education seems to have dawned, at long last, on the international community", in *The Huffington Post* (March 2016). Available from www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/sarah-brown/all-women-everywhere-girls-education_b_9512788.html.

[22] Campaign updates are available from www.unhcr.org/ibelong/.

traditional notions of family and gender roles in their societies. In Libya, for example, OHCHR found that high-profile women activists promoting equality, social justice and accountability have been assassinated. I urge Member States to amend discriminatory legislation and ensure that gender equality is promoted in laws, policies, practices and institutions, including when systems are built or reformed in the aftermath of conflict.

37. I welcome initiatives to engage all constituencies in efforts to promote and protect women's human rights and prevent violence in conflict-affected settings. My Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide led a programme focusing on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. The quota for women participation in the programme was set at 30 per cent. At some of the regional meetings organized within the programme in 2015 and 2016, female participation reached 50 per cent. All outcome documents from regional meetings include strong gender language.

Protection in situations of displacement

38. The scale of the current forced displacement crisis and its increasingly protracted nature is of deep concern. Displacement driven by armed conflict and violence continues to increase, with 8.6 million new cases recorded in 2015. Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen accounted for over half of the total of these cases. In many contexts, people fleeing conflict and violence continue to be subject to a range of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including sexual and gender-based violence. The lack of protection from such violations is an important driver of displacement and has profound humanitarian consequences. I urge all stakeholders to work in partnership to ensure that the response to movements of refugees and migrants is gender-responsive and to intensify efforts to address the root causes of displacement, including conflict.

39. The United Nations and Member States must scale up efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women in refugee or internally displaced person camps and in transit. UN-Women operates safe spaces for women and children in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, providing employment and day-care services, as well as raising awareness of gender-based violence and women's empowerment. The World Food Programme (WFP) has promoted safe access to food distribution sites, especially for women. In the Niger, for example, their distribution sites are located no further than 5 km from the refugee site, and pregnant and lactating women are served first. Few interventions have targeted the underlying social norms driving violence against women and girls during and after conflict. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has piloted an initiative in displacement camps and communities in Somalia and South Sudan to address these social norms. Preliminary results indicate that increasing numbers of people in the intervention communities report that it is wrong to blame women and girls who are raped.

Promoting gender equality in humanitarian action

40. At the World Humanitarian Summit, 9,000 participants from 173 Member States committed to implementing new measures that address the needs of the world's most vulnerable people. At high-level round tables, special sessions and side events, there were widespread calls for gender equality to become a central pillar of humanitarian assistance. Concrete commitments were announced at the high-level leaders round table

on the theme "Women and girls: catalysing action to achieve gender equality" and at the high-level round table on political leadership to prevent and end conflicts. The outcomes of the Summit affirmed the need for more robust gender-equality programming, increased leadership of women and girls in humanitarian action and respect for women's and girls' rights under international humanitarian law. I commend all those who made commitments and urge timely implementation to ensure transformational change.

C. Preventing and countering violent extremism

41. Terrorism and violent extremism continue to have devastating consequences that affect women and men differently. The violation of women's fundamental rights, including to health, education, bodily integrity and public life, lies at the heart of many of the agendas of these groups. United Nations-led investigations have uncovered the use of sexual and gender-based crimes as tactics of terrorist and violent extremist groups, in particular ISIL and Boko Haram (see S/2016/361), including rape, forced marriage, abductions and sexual slavery, which may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and even genocide. Accordingly, prosecution efforts should include the gender-specific international crimes perpetrated by these groups. Women are also participants in terrorist and violent extremist groups; groups such as ISIL and Boko Haram strategically recruit women in their efforts to build a state.

42. In resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council urged Member States and the United Nations system to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. It requested counter-terrorism bodies to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue and urged Member States and United Nations entities to conduct gender-sensitive research on the drivers of radicalization and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations. It also called for an increased amount of funding to be committed to addressing gender dimensions within efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism. In paragraph 169 of my previous report, I proposed that the 15 per cent minimum target applied to United Nations peacebuilding projects also be applied to all projects to address new peace and security threats, including violent extremism. I am pleased that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and UN-Women are working to assess current allocations and operationalize this recommendation.

43. In response to resolution 2242 (2015), Member States, regional organizations and United Nations entities have initiated a range of activities, including on gender-sensitive research, security sector reform to increase women's participation in protection efforts, capacity-building, counter-messaging efforts and establishing practitioners' networks. The Global Alliance of Women Countering Extremism and Promoting Peace, Rights and Pluralism, which comprises nearly 20 women's organizations, enables women-led organizations to engage in international policy and programming debates to prevent and counter violent extremism.[23] Support for civil

[23] See September 2015 statement of the International Civil Society Action Network announcing the formation of the Global Alliance of Women Countering Extremism and Promoting Peace, Rights and Pluralism. Available from www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Alliance-Statement-Draft-9-30-15.pdf.

society organizations working in affected communities must be an essential component of prevention and response efforts.

44. In January 2016, I presented my Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism to the General Assembly (see A/70/674 and A/70/675), with gender equality as one of the seven priority areas. In addition, in its resolution 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, adopted in July 2016, the Assembly urged Member States and United Nations entities to seek greater consultations with women and women's organizations when developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. I encourage Member States and United Nations entities to integrate gender elements in their follow-up actions. Efforts to foster coordination and coherence in this area include the establishment by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force of a working group on adopting a gender-sensitive approach to preventing and countering terrorism, chaired by UN-Women, to support efforts by Member States and the United Nations system to mainstream gender throughout their activities.

D. Preventing conflict, building and sustaining peace

45. Since my previous report, there have been significant normative developments in the field of peacebuilding. Notably, the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/262, and the Security Council, in its resolution 2282 (2016), placed the concept of "sustaining peace" at the core of the work of the United Nations. In these resolutions, the Assembly and the Council emphasized women's participation and moved away from confining peacebuilding to the post-conflict phase alone. Instead, they suggested that sustaining peace spanned the entire conflict cycle, with a focus on prevention and on addressing the continuation, escalation and recurrence of conflict.

46. The Security Council recalling its resolutions on women and peace and security, adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, marking another important step towards more inclusive processes for building and sustaining peace. I look forward to the upcoming progress study on youth, peace and security, including research on the roles of young women in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. I expect that the study will shed light on the twofold discrimination young women can face due to age and gender and will include specific recommendations to address their needs and empower them in conflict and post-conflict settings. The adoption by the Peacebuilding Commission of a gender strategy also signals an unprecedented commitment from an intergovernmental body to systematically integrate a gender perspective across its work.

Economic recovery and access to resources

47. Equal employment opportunities and asset ownership are key determinants of economic prosperity and a society's ability to recover from conflict. However, data confirms large gender gaps in access to decent work in conflict and post-conflict countries. In all such countries with available data, the employment-to-population rate for men is higher than it is for women, with some countries displaying differences larger than 25 percentage points. In several countries, discriminatory laws and customs constrain women's access to property, inheritance, land rights, natural resources and economic recovery options. Although most of these countries prohibit gender-based

discrimination in national constitutions in practice, these principles are often superseded by customary or religious law. In conflict and post-conflict countries, where customary law and discriminatory practices are likely to be favoured over weakened rule of law systems, the proportion of women landholders reaches only 11.1 per cent.

48. I welcome initiatives to end discrimination against women in access to employment, land and resources, which accelerate their economic recovery. For example, in the Niger, women members of a community group organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) have obtained a 99-year land lease contract from local landowners, becoming the first women's group in the area to obtain legal and secure access to land. In Sri Lanka, the Australian Community Rehabilitation Program, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provides conflict widows with economic opportunities, including financial assistance and business planning training.[24] In South Sudan, WFP is assisting women in asset creation by constructing shallow wells for crop irrigation, in order to reduce tension over scarce water resources and build social cohesion among different social groups. As climate change provokes an increase in tensions within and among communities, natural disasters become more frequent and natural resources scarcer, women must be further empowered to access and manage natural resources, including land and water. I welcome in this regard the launch of the joint programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-Women, UNDP and the Peacebuilding Support Office on promoting gender-responsive approaches to natural resources management for peacebuilding.

49. As part of the work of the United Nations to advance gender equality in peacebuilding interventions in 2015, UNDP allocated 46 per cent of the monetary benefits from temporary employment in the context of early economic recovery programmes to women and girls, an increase from 38 per cent in 2014.[25] It is now possible to monitor these allocations because UNDP has integrated indicator 18 (see S/2010/498, annex)[26] into its strategic plan for the period 2014-2017. I encourage other United Nations entities to include specific measures on women and peace and security in their own monitoring frameworks.

Governance and women's participation in elected and non-elected bodies

50. Promoting good governance and building inclusive societies requires women's representation in legislative and governance bodies and state institutions. The contributions, full participation and leadership of women are essential as constitutions are drafted or revised, legal and policy frameworks are revisited and State or local-level institutions are built or restructured.

51. Despite firm global commitments to gender balance in decision-making, progress remains uneven and falls far short of targets. As at 1 July 2016, only 15 countries had a woman Head of State or Government, 2 of which (Liberia and Nepal) were conflict or

[24] See, for example, IOM, "Kajanthini: a model for women" (July 2015).

[25] Available data for 2015 cover Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Jordan, Mali, Mauritania, Pakistan, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda and Yemen.

[26] The designation of indicator 18, which is linked to paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), reads "Percentage of (monetary equivalent, estimate) benefits from temporary employment in the context of early economic recovery programmes received by women and girls".

post-conflict countries. The global proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women has increased in the past decade, reaching 22.7 per cent in 2016.[27] However, the proportion in conflict and post-conflict countries is just 16.6 per cent, a drop from 18 per cent one year ago. The use of legislative quotas has promoted representation; in conflict and post-conflict countries utilizing them, women occupied 22 per cent of parliament seats, compared with 11.2 per cent in those that do not.

52. In 2015, several United Nations entities, including the Department of Political Affairs, which serves as the system-wide focal point for electoral assistance activities, UNDP and UN-Women, provided technical assistance for gender-sensitive electoral processes, women's participation and leadership. Notably, all electoral needs assessment reports during this period included gender analysis and recommendations, and 50 per cent of UNDP electoral assistance projects included strengthening of women's participation as voters, candidates and election administrators as a significant or principal objective.

53. Specific country results achieved in 2015 include the reinstatement of the 25 per cent quota for women in provincial councils and district councils in Afghanistan, and the adoption of a new law in Mali stipulating a 30 per cent quota for women in elected and nominated positions. Nepal's new constitution ensures the fundamental right of women to participate in all State organs and guarantees women's political representation in various government structures and at the leadership level. Its adoption was followed by the formation of a new government, and the election of Nepal's first woman President, Bidhya Devi Bhandari, and the country's first woman Speaker of Parliament, Onsari Gharti Magar.

54. Women's representation and leadership at the local level is critical. The availability and comparability of data on women's political participation at local levels is limited, but available evidence indicates that women's representation rates tend to be much lower than at national levels. As part of its monitoring and reporting efforts with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, UN-Women is developing data collection methodology for measuring the proportion of women's representation in local government in an internationally comparable manner. The data will enable further research on the contributions of women local leaders worldwide, including in conflict-affected settings. Promoting women's participation in public administration should also be prioritized in these settings. UNDP is developing a methodology to measure women's representation and leadership in public service. In four out of five country case studies on gender equality in public administration in post-conflict settings, women hold only 18 per cent or less of decision-making positions.[28]

55. I am concerned by the persistence of barriers to women's participation in political processes, including targeted violence; deterring women from voting independently; deterring women from running for office and compelling their resignation if elected; and hindering women electoral administrators from carrying out their functions. In Iraq in 2015, the United Nations warned that educated, professional women, particularly women who had run as candidates in elections for public office were particularly at risk

[27] Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of June 2016. Data available from www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/world010616.htm.

[28] UNDP, Gender Equality in Public Administration (June 2014). Available from www.undp.org/gepa.

of being executed by militants.[29] Similarly, Iraq's Independent High Elections Commission has consistently reported on the actions perpetrated by ISIL against its current and former staff, both female and male. A February 2016 report indicated that three former women employees of the Commission had been arrested, dragged and executed by hanging in Mosul. UN-Women is mapping programming responses to mitigate violence against women in politics.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform

56. I reiterate the importance of gender-responsive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform, and appreciate efforts made by some States in this regard. In Colombia, a gender strategy informed the reintegration of demobilized persons across 800 municipalities, contributing to improved responses to women's needs. Figures from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes implemented by the United Nations in six field missions[30] suggest that sustained attention to this area is needed. Only 12 per cent of beneficiaries in programmes for the reintegration of ex-combatants and youth at risk were women, compared with 26 per cent in 2014. Female participation was higher in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (32 per cent of beneficiaries were women) and Haiti (27 per cent). I encourage all actors to track not only the proportion of women beneficiaries but also the actual proportion of funds received by women. Fulfilling commitments with regard to women and peace and security in the ongoing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes in the Central African Republic and Mali should be prioritized. A gender-responsive approach is also essential in non-formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes such as those for preventing violent extremism, community violence reduction, stabilization and other pre-disarmament efforts. Similarly, although gender-responsive security sector reform is now integrated across policy commitments, gaps remain in initial assessments, and in the implementation and monitoring of initiatives. All members of the security sector must be vetted for conflict-related crimes against women, including sexual and gender-based violence.

57. I welcome the increased commitment to address the destabilizing impact of the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, including its negative impact on women and girls. The impact of the Arms Trade Treaty began to be felt in 2015. A number of civil society organizations and, in some countries, parliamentarians, have invoked the Treaty in their advocacy efforts. By the end of 2015, 79 States had ratified or acceded to the Treaty. In order to assist States with implementation, the Office of Disarmament Affairs has developed a practical online toolkit.[31] The risk of gender-based violence must, in accordance with article 7(4), form an essential criterion in assessments preceding the authorization of any export by States parties of conventional weapons that fall within the Treaty's scope. I reiterate the recommendations contained in my report on this issue (S/2015/289), including the need to ensure women's full participation in combating illicit transfers.

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[29] Samuel Smith, "UN: ISIS killing educated women, especially politicians", *Christian Post* (21 January 2015). Available from

[30] Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Haiti and Sudan.

[31] Data available from www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/att/.

58. The availability of data on the existence of national mechanisms for the control of illicit small arms and light weapons remains uneven.[32] Between 2014 and 2016,[33] 80 States voluntarily contributed reports to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Of these, 66 per cent reported having national coordination agencies on small arms and light weapons, 95 per cent having a national focal point and 92 per cent having legislation to regulate small arms and light weapons. Of the 11 conflict and post-conflict countries that contributed reports 8 (72 per cent) reported having national coordination agencies, compared with 66 per cent in 2013. All 11 countries had a national focal point, while 10 (91 per cent) had related legislation in place, an increase from 44 per cent in the previous reporting period.

59. The United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean support gender-focused activities and women's participation in decision-making. The latter developed a tool for assessing gender-related risks of conventional arms transfers in the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

60. I reiterate the importance of the initiative by the Office of Disarmament Affairs to develop a gender mainstreaming action plan (established in 2003, updated in 2014 and 2016). The overall goal of the plan is to facilitate progress on disarmament, and it is built on the assumption that disarmament efforts can be strengthened through the integration of a gender analysis. In this vein, I welcome the initiative of the Office to develop in 2016 a training programme for all staff on women and peace and security.

Women's access to justice

61. Significant advancements in criminal accountability for conflict-related sexual and gender-based crimes have taken place recently. In March 2016, the International Criminal Court convicted Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo for his failure to prevent and punish the rape, murder and pillage committed by his troops in the Central African Republic in 2002 and 2003. This was the first conviction at the International Criminal Court for charges related to sexual and gender-based violence. In May 2016, the Extraordinary African Chambers in Senegal, supported by the African Union, convicted the former president of Chad, Hissène Habré, of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including rape and sexual slavery. This was the first time that the court of one country had prosecuted the former ruler of another for human rights violations, and the first time that a Head of State had been held accountable, under international law, for having personally committed the crime of rape. At the national level, in February 2016, a Guatemalan court convicted two former military officers of crimes against humanity in the case of 11 indigenous Q'eqchi' women who had been subjected to sexual violence and domestic slavery at the Sepur Zarco military base during the country's armed conflict. This was the first time that a national court anywhere in the world had considered charges of sexual slavery during an armed conflict, a crime under international law. These three seminal cases demonstrate that decades of efforts by lawyers, advocates and survivors to seek justice for sexual and gender-based violence

[32] Data for this indicator is compiled annually to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

[33] Reporting to the Programme of Action is biennial, with most countries publishing reports on even years.

are now bearing fruit. Overall, however, access by women to justice remains woefully inadequate.

62. The United Nations, Member States and civil society must ensure that the global momentum for accountability for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence continues to grow. This will require continued financial and political support. The roster of experts on sexual and gender-based violence operated by UN-Women and the Justice Rapid Response mechanism has yielded results. During 2015, 25 experts were deployed to provide support to investigations and accountability processes globally, including to national authorities.

63. The United Nations continued to support accountability through international investigations by commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, which are considered to be important tools for documenting crimes, creating a historical record and paving the way for future justice and accountability measures (see S/2015/716, para. 60). In 2015, the Human Rights Council received reports from commissions of inquiry on Eritrea (A/HRC/29/42), the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/28/69 and A/HRC/30/48) and the 2014 Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/29/52), and from fact-finding missions to Iraq (A/HRC/28/18) and on Boko Haram (A/HRC/30/67). UN-Women continued to provide gender expertise to all commissions of inquiry and many OHCHR-led fact-finding missions, and OHCHR worked to strengthen the gender-integration capacities of these bodies. These efforts contributed to findings of sexual and gender-based violence in the final reports of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. For example, in 2016, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic stated that ISIL had committed genocide through acts intended to destroy the Yazidi community, including rape and sexual slavery, and by imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. Documenting crimes is essential for accountability. I continue to encourage Member States, donors and regional organizations to draw upon existing rosters of trained professionals who are readily deployable, such as the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, and the UN-Women-Justice Rapid Response roster, to ensure appropriate and timely documentation and investigation and eventual justice for these heinous crimes (see S/2016/361, para. 91 (h)). An expert from the roster has been deployed to support the Independent Special Investigation into the violence which occurred in Juba, South Sudan, in July 2016.

64. In previous reports, I have called for justice measures that respond to the full range of women's human rights violations (see S/2013/525, para. 48). Truth commissions provide the means to address historical injustice and conflict-related human rights violations, including broader socioeconomic violations. The United Nations currently supports two truth commissions, in Mali and Tunisia. As at 31 December 2015, 34.6 per cent of the commissioners in the two commissions were women, and both commissions have explicit mandates on sexual and gender-based violence.

65. As indicated in the 2015 Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Reparations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, reparations programmes provide redress for past abuses and should strive to have a transformative effect on gender inequalities. Such inequalities can lead to violations and compound the consequences of the crime. Several countries are creating or implementing such programmes. For instance, in 2015, Peru created a registry of the victims of forced sterilization measures that had

been carried out in the country from 1998 to 2002. Those enrolled will benefit from free legal assistance, psychological support and health care. In 2015, Kosovo [34] approved a new regulation for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, according to which survivors would be identified and given official status as civilian victims of war eligible for benefits, including a monthly pension. The United Nations is now supporting the office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo to develop a comprehensive and transformative reparations plan for these survivors.

66. For many women, the end of a conflict does not mean greater security since violence against women often spikes during the peacebuilding period, and rule of law institutions are too weak to respond. The United Nations and regional organizations must continue to work in partnership with Member States to ensure that access to justice is provided for violence experienced in the post-conflict period and that rule of law institutions are responsive to women's needs. Between August 2015 and May 2016, the Global Focal Point on Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict and other Crisis Situations, a joint undertaking led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP, together with OHCHR, UN-Women, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, supported the design and establishment of a Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic, integrating gender perspectives in all its operations and prioritizing sexual and gender-based violence investigations. The Global Focal Point has also developed joint rule of law programmes and teams with funds and activities to strengthen women's access to justice and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and the State of Palestine. This includes support to women's organizations and the gender units of rule of law institutions; the establishment of gender-responsive specialized services and referral pathways for victims of sexual and gender-based violence; legislative reviews to eliminate discriminatory provisions; and oversight of informal justice systems. An example of the support offered by one Member State to another in this regard is the assistance that Australia provided to the Vulnerable Persons Unit of the Timor-Leste National Police Force to investigate gender-based violence, including through infrastructural and mentoring support.

Gender-responsive transitions

67. It is critical to identify peacebuilding needs and reconfigure the United Nations presence on the ground during the transition and drawdown periods of peace operations because the risks of relapse often increase during such periods. Effective transition processes require joint conflict analysis, the identification of collective outcomes, strategic planning and resource mobilization. In 2015, the peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Liberia (UNMIL) and Haiti (MINUSTAH) were in the process of drawdowns. The three 2015 peace and security reviews emphasized the need to integrate gender considerations and analysis in these processes, while ensuring that United Nations entities and national partners have adequate capacity to support gender, and women and peace and security functions. In follow-up to the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, UN-Women and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations led a study of good practices to inform policy

[34] References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

guidance on women and peace and security issues during transition periods. The guidance will be piloted in transition contexts with accompanying technical support.

E. Initiatives to monitor implementation and advance results

68. Member States remain the most influential actors in the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as members of the United Nations and regional organizations, parties to conflicts, donors, troop- and police- contributors to peacekeeping, and political players in a specific conflict or region. They have the primary responsibility to ensure that global commitments to the agenda are integrated into domestic policies and laws. In this regard, I welcome Spain's initiative to establish a national focal point network for women and peace and security and welcome the inaugural meeting held in September 2016.

69. Since my previous report, 11 countries or territories have adopted national action plans on women and peace and security, bringing the total number to 63.[35] Of these, 9 are second generation plans, and 5 are third generation plans. Of these plans, 45 (70 per cent) have monitoring frameworks with progress indicators, and 16 (25 per cent) have designated implementation budgets — a slight increase from 23 per cent in 2014. For example, Norway's third action plan places greater focus on results and accountability than earlier plans, with four ministries reporting annually using a set of indicators and having earmarked funding for implementation, including for civil society organizations working in the context of women and peace and security.

70. The localization programme facilitated by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, whereby local authorities develop local action plans or integrate commitments related to women and peace and security in their community development plans, remains a key tool for translating policy into practice. The programme is currently implemented in 11 countries: Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Nepal, Liberia, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Serbia, South Sudan and Uganda. In Uganda's local districts where local action plans have been adopted the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence has decreased.

71. Several countries are currently elaborating, reviewing and adopting new, second or third generation action plans, building on the experience and good practices of others. Sweden's third action plan was informed by direct country consultation in conflict and post-conflict countries. In July 2016, over 80 participants from 17 countries gathered in Bangkok for the Asia-Pacific regional symposium on national action plans on women and peace and security to exchange knowledge on the effective development, implementation, monitoring and review of action plans and in order to review region-specific priorities and emerging issues, including the prevention of

[35] As of May 2016, this includes: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Lithuania, Mali, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Kosovo and State of Palestine.

violence, climate change and displacement. Strong leadership, inclusiveness, robust financing, localization strategies, and good monitoring and evaluation systems were all identified as key components for the effectiveness of the action plans.

72. The 2015 high-level review reaffirmed the centrality of women's human rights to peace and security and the role of human rights bodies in securing accountability for violations of women's rights in conflict-affected settings. From 1 January to 31 December 2015, acting in response to reported allegations of human rights violations, the special procedures mechanisms of the Human Rights Council sent a total of 532 communications to 123 States and 13 non-State actors. Out of this total, 23 communications were sent to the countries and territories under review.[36] These concerned incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence; abductions and the forced marriage of girls; honour killings; discriminatory legislation; murder, threats and/or reprisals against women human rights defenders; the arrest and detention of women human rights defenders; trafficking in persons; virginity testing; and the denial of sexual and reproductive health rights.

73. I welcome the growing use of the review process under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as an opportunity to engage with States regarding their implementation of the agenda, including in relation to general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, which was adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In three of the four concluding observations for conflict countries in 2015, the Committee referenced general recommendation No. 30, urging Liberia to review its national action plan and urging Lebanon and Madagascar to adopt national action plans.[37] The Committee should expand its consideration of the women and peace and security agenda by recommending concrete actions towards implementation. This should include recommendations to non-conflict countries regarding extraterritorial obligations under the Convention, with regard to donor assistance, involvement as third parties in peace negotiation processes and the formation of trade agreements with conflict-affected countries (see CEDAW/C/GC/30, para. 9).

74. The Human Rights Council offers another venue for addressing Member State accountability. In 2015, nine conflict and post-conflict countries were assessed under the universal periodic review and received questions, comments or recommendations on issues relating to women and peace and security, including sexual violence, women's political participation and the adoption of national action plans. National human rights committees play a critical role in translating international norms and applying them in the local context. In Afghanistan, for example, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission includes a women's rights unit and has investigated some 29,947 cases of violence against women in the period from 2002 to 2015.[38] As of June 2016, of the 34 countries and territories reviewed, 16 had national

[36] Data for this indicator is compiled annually to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

[37] CEDAW/C/LBR/CO/7-8 (Liberia), CEDAW/C/LBN/CO/4-5 (Lebanon) and CEDAW/C/MDG/CO/6-7 (Madagascar). General Recommendation No. 30 was not referenced in the concluding observations for Kyrgyzstan.

[38] Data available from www.aihrc.org.af/home/introduction.

human rights institutions accredited with A or B status and 1 had an ombudsperson institution.[39]

75. At the regional level, attention to the women and peace and security agenda has continued to grow. As of May 2016, nine regional organizations[40] had adopted dedicated implementation frameworks, including regional action plans, on women and peace and security, compared with five organizations in 2015. These regional commitments incentivize implementation at the national level, as evidenced by a growth in national action plans in the regions, improved knowledge-sharing and monitoring of implementation. The formulation of a continental results framework by the African Union Commission to monitor implementation is an example.

76. Available data on women's representation in regional organizations shows that participation in senior positions remains uneven.[41] As at December 2015, less than 25 per cent of all senior posts[42] — at Headquarters and in the field combined — in reporting organizations[43] were occupied by women, with their representation typically lower in field posts. In most reporting entities, women were largely absent from special representative and envoy posts. I encourage organizations with low women's representation and those that are experiencing regression in this field to consider temporary special measures and other forms of promotion initiatives to encourage women's access to managerial posts, both at the Headquarters and field levels.

Actions by the United Nations

77. The United Nations is responsible for modelling and delivering on global norms and standards on women and peace and security. As such, the three peace and security reviews put forward gender-specific recommendations for the United Nations to improve coherence, coordination, leadership, gender balance and gender expertise. I am working with senior managers to ensure effective follow-up and have put in place initiatives to strengthen accountability, such as gender-specific commitments and indicators in the 2016 compacts with my senior managers.

Representation

78. During my two terms, I have appointed several women leaders in the United Nations, including five special representatives heading peace operations and the first-ever woman Force Commander. I recognize, however, that the Organization's gender-parity goal remains unachieved, especially at the managerial level. As at 31 December

[39] Data for this indicator is compiled annually to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Information on the accreditation procedure is available from http://nhri.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx.

[40] Economic Community of West African States, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Pacific Islands Forum, African Union, International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), League of Arab States (LAS), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

[41] Data for this indicator is compiled annually to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

[42] Includes senior officials at Headquarters, special representatives, envoys, heads of country offices, heads of missions and mediators.

[43] African Union, Commonwealth, Council of Europe, European Union External Action Service, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, LAS, NATO, Organization of American States, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, OSCE.

2015, 25 per cent of peace operations were headed by women, the same proportion as in 2014 and only slightly higher than the 18 per cent of 2010. Women's leadership remains higher in peacekeeping missions, with 31 per cent of the 16 missions in 2015 headed by women, than in special political missions, where the figure was 10 per cent of the 10 missions. In terms of deputy heads, the total proportion of women dropped to 18 per cent in 2015, compared with 24 per cent in 2014, regressing to the levels of 2012 and 2013, a proportion only slightly higher than the 15 per cent of 2010.

79. I am concerned about the latest data pointing to stagnation, and even regression, in women's representation in field missions. In 2015, only 23 per cent of positions in the professional and higher categories (P-2 to D-2) in peace operations were occupied by women, down from 25 per cent in 2014. In peacekeeping missions, the proportion improved slightly, from 21 per cent in 2011 to 23 per cent in 2015, a significant lapse after reaching a record high at 33 per cent in 2014. Similarly, women occupied 18 per cent of the positions at the P-5 to D-2 levels in special political missions in 2011 and currently occupy nearly 24 per cent, also registering a drop from the 29 per cent figure of 2014. Data comparison across all professional categories show that women's representation is greater at lower professional levels. With regard to resident coordinators, 8 (26 per cent) of the total 31 resident coordinators placed in conflict and post-conflict countries in 2015 were women. Breaking glass ceilings within the Organization remains a pressing priority, as emphasized in my 2015 reports on the future of peace operations (S/2015/682) and on women and peace and security (S/2015/716).

80. Ongoing efforts to improve the gender balance in field leadership positions include targeted outreach by the Department of Field Support to identify and attract potential women candidates, in particular from underrepresented Member States, and initiatives such as the senior women talent pipeline. In addition, gender considerations are increasingly mainstreamed in the selection process for senior-level appointments, including: avoiding all-male teams, shortlisting at least one woman per interview and including at least one woman in all interview panels. I reiterate my call to Member States to share profiles of qualified women candidates and appoint more women to senior leadership posts in national institutions as part of a global response to promote women's leadership.

81. Beyond peace operations, women continue to be underrepresented in professional posts across United Nations entities operating in conflict and post-conflict settings. The proportion of professional posts occupied by women remained below 50 per cent in every entity that reported data for 2015,[44] except UN-Women. Representation was closest to parity in UNFPA, UNDP and OHCHR, where women occupied more than 40 per cent of all posts. However, at senior levels (P-5 to D-2), gaps widen. Exceptions include the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNFPA, where women occupied roughly half of the senior posts. In OHCHR and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), however, the proportions of women in these positions did not reach 15 per cent. Between 2014 and 2015, the proportion of women in senior posts in these settings declined in almost every entity. Exceptions were UNICEF, the only entity registering a noticeable increase (from 36 to

[44] FAO, IFAD, IOM, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, OHCHR, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, WFP and WHO.

44 per cent), and UNDP, where the proportion remained constant at 28 per cent. Beyond leadership positions, the proportion of posts occupied by women at all professional levels combined remained more or less constant for almost all entities. In UN-Women, 75 per cent of all posts were occupied by women in 2015. The proportion was closer to parity in conflict and post-conflict duty stations, at 57 per cent. In comparison with other entities, women's representation rates were greater at senior levels, with women holding 79 per cent of senior posts overall and 65 per cent of senior posts in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Gender expertise

82. All three peace and security reviews recognized the importance of technical expertise for the implementation of norms and standards on women and peace and security, and put forward recommendations aimed at enhancing the United Nations gender architecture both at Headquarters and in the field.

83. As of December 2015, all eight multidimensional peacekeeping missions had gender units led by senior advisers, and the eight traditional peacekeeping missions all had gender focal points. In line with Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), all gender advisers in the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support are now situated the offices of my special representatives for more direct reporting lines and strengthened technical support.

84. Of the 10 special political missions active in 2015, 6 (60 per cent) had gender advisers,[45] compared with 50 per cent in 2014. All are situated in the offices of my special representatives. However, of the 25 gender advisors deployed, most were at the junior level (P-3 and below). Only two missions (20 per cent) had gender advisors at the P-5 level and above, compared with 50 per cent of missions in 2014. The proportion of missions with gender focal points went down from 100 per cent in 2013 and 92 per cent in 2014 to 90 per cent currently.

85. As of December 2015, 28 international and 7 national women protection advisers had been deployed to peace operations in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan, with responsibilities for monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence. Five positions were vacant at the time of writing, including the two positions established for Sudan (Darfur). The peace operations in Afghanistan and Liberia had appointed focal points for conflict-related sexual violence. I urge the rapid deployment of similar expertise to other conflict-affected countries, such as Iraq, where abuses continue to mount.

86. As of December 2015, UN-Women had a country presence in 23 conflict and post-conflict countries or areas [46] and was implementing peace, security and

[45] United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

[46] Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen and State of Palestine.

humanitarian activities in 68 countries. In 2015, United Nations country teams had 71 gender theme groups and 26 inter-agency groups, with an integrated focus on gender and human rights; of these 6 gender theme groups and 12 additional inter-agency groups with a gender focus were active in conflict and post-conflict settings.[47] These groups can promote coherence and provide coordinated support to Member States. I support the call in resolution 2242 (2015) to encourage closer working relationships within the United Nations system. I welcome the joint initiatives that are already are under way and emphasize the importance of system-wide collaboration among entities responsible for implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

The work of the Security Council

87. I welcome the Security Council's follow-up on the commitments expressed in resolutions 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015) to the consistent integration of women and peace and security in its work.[48] The meetings of the Council's new Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, established pursuant to the 2015 high-level review, provide an additional tool for this purpose. In the first half of 2016, the Informal Expert Group met on developments regarding women and peace and security in Afghanistan (S/2016/673), the Central African Republic (S/2016/672), Iraq (S/2016/683) and Mali (S/2016/682).

88. A range of gender-specific concerns were brought to the Security Council's attention in 2015, including through briefings from the Executive Director of UN-Women, my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and civil society representatives. All thematic reports to the Council included references to women and peace and security. I acknowledge, however, that greater efforts are needed to ensure that gender-specific analysis is integrated across all deliberations, reports and briefings, including on country-specific situations.[49] I encourage the Security Council to systematically request gender-specific information for all issues and situations on its agenda.

89. In 2015, 123 reports were submitted to the Security Council. Of these, 47 were periodic reports submitted by peacekeeping and special political missions.[50] While all 22 periodic reports submitted by special political missions and all 25 submitted by peacekeeping missions contained references related to women and peace and security, I recognize that linkages between findings and actionable recommendations in reporting and briefings still need to improve.

90. The Security Council's role in establishing, reviewing and renewing the mandates of peace operations creates opportunities to follow up on the implementation of

[47] Data from the United Nations Development Group Information Management System. Data available for 131 United Nations country teams.

[48] Data is collected annually for the indicator on the number and type of actions taken by the Security Council related to resolution 1325 (2000).

[49] Policy brief prepared by the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, entitled "Mapping women, peace and security in the UN Security Council: (2015)". Available from http://womenpeacesecurity.org/media/pdf-NGOWG_MappingWPS_PolicyBrief_2015.pdf.

[50] In their periodic reporting to the Security Council, the Department of Political Affairs, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provide data annually on the indicator and on the extent to which United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions include information on violations of women's and girls' human rights.

resolution 1325 (2000). In 2015, eight peacekeeping operations[51] and four special political missions[52] had tasks related to women and peace and security in their mandates.[53] I appreciate the emphasis placed by the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on gender analysis in 2016 through revised directives, guidance and training. Budget negotiations taking place in the meetings of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly are essential to ensuring that peacekeeping and special political missions are capable of integrating gender as a cross-cutting issue.

91. In 2015, the Security Council adopted 64 resolutions and issued 26 presidential statements. Of the 64 resolutions, 42 (65.5 per cent) contained references related to women and peace and security, a share similar to previous years. Most of the references concerned conflict-related sexual violence, followed by other human rights violations and the political participation of women. Concern was expressed about human rights violations against women and girls linked to violent extremism and terrorism.[54]

92. In resolution 2242 (2015), the Security Council committed to ensuring that the relevant expert groups for sanctions committees had the necessary gender expertise. As at 31 December 2015, 8 of 16 sanctions regimes (56 per cent)[55] included violations of international human rights and humanitarian law as designation criteria, with 5 regimes (31 per cent) explicitly including acts involving sexual violence or violations targeting women as designation criteria.[56] In 2015, at least two individuals were listed for these offenses. Out of the 16 published expert group reports associated with sanctions regimes submitted to the Council in 2015, 11 (69 per cent) contained information on human rights violations targeting women, sexual and gender-based violence or the role of women in armed groups.

93. In 2015, the Security Council undertook two field missions:[57] to Haiti in January and to Burundi, the Central African Republic and Ethiopia in March. Although considerations on women and peace and security were not included in the terms of reference for the mission to Haiti, information was included in the findings briefing. The mission to Africa in March included specific mention of women and peace and security in the terms of reference, the report and in the briefing. Both missions met with women's groups. I encourage the Council to systematically integrate gender-specific concerns in its visiting missions and to follow up on priorities raised through deliberations on country-specific issues and the Informal Expert Group on women and peace and security.

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[51] MINUSCA, UNOCI, African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), MONUSCO, MINUSTAH, UNMIL, Mali (MINUSMA) and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

[52] UNAMA, UNIOGBIS, UNSOM, and United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).

[53] The mandates are available from www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/data.shtml.

[54] For example, the Security Council expressed concern that acts of sexual and gender-based violence were known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups (see S/PRST/2015/25).

[55] Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire (since terminated), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen.

[56] Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

[57] See, for example, S/2015/40, S/PV.7372, S/2015/162, S/2015/503 and S/PV.7407.

94. Direct interaction with civil society and women peacebuilders is essential to inform the work of the Security Council. The commitment in resolution 2242 (2015) to invite civil society, including women's organizations, to brief the Council under country-specific agenda items and relevant thematic areas should be upheld. As of August 2016, civil society representatives had yet to be invited to country-specific briefings. In 2015, women civil society representatives from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria and Somalia addressed the Council during open debates on women and peace and security, the protection of civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, trafficking in persons and the protection of journalists.[58]

Financing the women and peace and security agenda

95. The human, environmental and economic costs of conflict are immense, yet far too few funds are invested to prevent conflict and avoid relapse. Through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Member States recognized the linkages between peace and sustainable development, reiterating that, without respect for human rights, there would be neither. I expect national Governments and development actors to make these commitments a reality. I welcome the stronger recognition within and beyond the Security Council of the need for adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, as expressed in its resolution 2282 (2016), including the need to invest more in conflict prevention and for greater implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, in accordance with its resolution 2242 (2015). However, tremendous financing gaps remain.

96. I remain concerned about the diversion of resources from development to the waging of war. It is estimated that global military expenditures in 2015 reached $1.6 billion ($1,634,985 million)[59] in current prices. This is roughly 32 times higher than the combined spending by donor countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) on conflict and post-conflict countries through bilateral sector-allocable official development assistance in 2014.[60] The share of global military spending incurred by conflict and post-conflict countries is rising and reached 2.4 per cent in 2015, often outstripping the amount of funds these countries are spending on much needed public services.

97. The share of sector-allocable official development aid from OECD-DAC donor countries to fragile States that focuses on gender equality must be increased. In 2014, more than 51 per cent of the total aid from OECD-DAC donor countries was allocated to conflict and post-conflict countries. However, only 7 per cent of aid to those countries was specifically marked as targeting peace and security, and of that amount, less than 1 per cent targeted gender equality significantly.

98. I encourage Member States to sustain gender-focused investments for preventing conflict, addressing fragility and building peace. In Myanmar, the Joint Peace Fund, supported by Australia, Sweden and the United Kingdom, committed to spending at least 15 per cent on women's rights. Roughly 13 per cent of Sweden's aid to fragile

[58] See S/PV.7533, S/PV.7374, S/PV.7428, S/PV.7585 and S/PV.7450.

[59] Data available from www.sipri.org/databases/milex.

[60] The latest available figures are for 2014 because official figures of sector-allocable official development assistance data are published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development with a delay.

States in 2015 targeted gender equality as a primary objective, as did 14 per cent of its aid to conflict, peace and security. New promising developments include Australia's commitment to allocating a minimum of 80 per cent of aid — regardless of its objectives — for addressing gender issues, and the United Kingdom's target to provide a minimum of 50 per cent of aid to fragile contexts, with the firm intention of ensuring programme delivery for women and girls.

99. I emphasize the role and responsibility of development banks, such as the World Bank, in furthering gender equality through direct financing and reiterate the importance of ensuring a strong gender focus for allocations in conflict settings.

100. More United Nations entities operating in conflict and post-conflict settings are now screening financial allocations using gender marker systems (see E/2016/57). In an upward trend from 5 per cent in 2011, the Peacebuilding Fund, in 2015, exceeded my 15 per cent target for the first time, allocating 15.7 per cent of funds to projects with the principal objective of gender equality and women's empowerment. [61] With the launch of the Peacebuilding Fund's third gender promotion initiative in 2016, I expect that the trend will continue. The initiative, which promotes financial coordination across United Nations entities, is now associated with the first Youth Promotion Initiative to support the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015), including young women's participation in peacebuilding.

101. Data suggest that marking budgets has not necessarily resulted in an increased focus on gender in programming in conflict and post-conflict settings. I am concerned about signs of weakening gender focus and an overall shift from targeting gender equality as principal objective, to supporting it as a significant objective. For instance, while UNICEF met the 15 per cent target, with 16 per cent of its interventions in conflict and post-conflict countries primarily targeting gender equality in 2015, this proportion has dropped from 19 per cent in 2014 and 23 per cent in 2013. In the case of UNDP, although allocations that have gender equality as a significant and principal objective have increased by 14 per cent since 2014, only 4 per cent were allocated to activities with gender equality as a principal objective in 2015, the same share as in 2013 and a drop from the 6 per cent achieved in 2012. While gender marking is a crucial tool for gender-sensitive planning and monitoring, more attention is needed to increase programming of gender-specific interventions to empower women and girls

102. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which uses the Inter-Agency Standing Committee gender marker, made it mandatory to mark allocations prior to the inclusion of projects in the humanitarian programme cycle appeals and in the humanitarian financing mechanisms it manages. Although in 2015 95 per cent of projects reviewed in a sample study across 18 funds contributed in some way to gender equality, only 4 per cent focused mainly on gender and 57 per cent addressed gender by targeting the specific needs of women, men, girls or boys.

103. Entities that have recently established and begun reporting using gender markers show wide differences in the gender focus of their allocations. Of the 14 loans for conflict and post-conflict countries approved by the Executive Board of IFAD in 2015, 53 per cent of the loan value had gender equality and women's empowerment as a

[61] The Peacebuilding Fund recently updated its gender marking methodology to capture all gender-focused activities, including the shares allocated to gender-sensitive efforts in projects that were not necessarily designed with the main objective of promoting gender equality.

principal focus, while 20 per cent of the value supported activities where gender was a significant objective. In the case of WFP, all projects in conflict and post-conflict countries addressed gender equality as a significant objective, amounting to 14 per cent of operational resources allocated to activities contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment.

104. I welcome the initiative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in collaboration with UN-Women, to develop a pilot project to assess the budget of select peacekeeping missions. I encourage entities, including those working on peacebuilding activities related to rule of law under the Global Focal Point arrangement, to emphasize gender-responsive financing, such as the minimum 15 per cent target, to meet women's needs, build their capacities and improve equality.

105. In terms of total funds, overall allocations to gender-focused interventions have increased over time across entities.[62] In 2015, gender-focused allocations of UNDP rose to almost $82 million, compared with $72 million in 2014. Of these, $28 million targeted the strengthening of institutions in order to deliver universal access to basic services, including rule of law and support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence, $16.5 million targeted emergency jobs, livelihoods and early recovery, and $15 million promoted gender-responsive national budgets and development strategies. UN-Women allocated $41.6 million to promote gender equality in peace, security and humanitarian action in 2015, of which $26 million went to peace and security field projects and over $6 million to humanitarian interventions on the ground. The figure more than doubled the $17.7 million of the previous year.

106. I reiterate the importance of supporting special funds such as the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, the Fund for Gender Equality and the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund of the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. The Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action,[63] established after the 2015 high-level review, is also an important new mechanism for addressing funding gaps in this area. The Global Acceleration Instrument has begun supporting women-centred peacebuilding initiatives in Burundi and will soon become active in Colombia, Fiji, Jordan and Solomon Islands. Scaled-up funding is needed for this initiative, and I encourage Member States to use it as a vehicle to sustain peace, prevent conflict and further localize efforts in line with the commitments of the World Humanitarian Summit.

III. Concluding observations and recommendations

107. At the high-level review held in 2015, Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations and civil society committed to accelerating progress on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). I am therefore pleased to describe in the present report noteworthy advances that have been made in the past year. However, I remain concerned that the achievements have not filled the vast gaps that I highlight

[62] Analysis made at current prices. Increments might appear higher than actual increases at constant prices.

[63] More information is available from http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/GAI00.

each year. The five priority areas, identified in my previous report and set out below, continue to require urgent action.

108. **Bringing women's participation and leadership to the core of peace and security efforts.** I re-emphasize the need to increase efforts in this area. Outstanding examples of this, from the Colombian peace talks to local mediation efforts in Burundi and Uganda, demonstrate that women are making a remarkable difference as agents of change. However, when available, data show that the overall shares of women's participation and leadership in peace and security efforts have stagnated or are even regressing in many areas, including post-conflict governance, peacekeeping, and within the very leadership of the United Nations. Therefore, I continue to call upon all stakeholders to remove obstacles and incentivize the effective participation of women in peace and security, as well as to carefully track and report on progress in this field. I also recognize that more must be done by the United Nations to accelerate progress in achieving gender balance in staffing at Headquarters and in the field.

109. **Protecting the human rights of women and girls during and after conflict.** There remains an urgent need to protect such rights. Despite progress achieved since the high-level review, including several high-level prosecutions of conflict-related sexual violence, human rights violations against women and girls have continued unabated, including with some armed actors and terrorist organizations attacking women's human rights as part of their political agenda. All actors must recommit to complying with obligations under international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law, to respect and promote the full range of women's human rights, to punish all violators, including non-State actors or those within its own troops, and to protect those who defend the human rights of women and girls. Women must play key roles in the design and implementation of protection and prevention strategies, as well as in the international community's determined efforts to root out sexual exploitation and abuse from the Organization.

110. **Ensuring gender-responsive planning and accountability for results.** The international community must do more in this area. I applaud efforts to include women's needs and perspectives in peace and security planning and monitoring, including through the Security Council's new Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, and the 11 new national action plans adopted in 2016. I also celebrate the linkages drawn between peace, security and sustainable development in the recently adopted 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. However, I note with concern that the availability of gender statistics remains limited in conflict settings and that reporting on progress towards the implementation of commitments related to the women and peace and security agenda is scarce overall, particularly at the national level. I therefore continue to encourage Member States, as well as international and regional actors to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment is mainstreamed across planning frameworks, implementation and monitoring efforts.

111. **Strengthening gender architecture and technical expertise.** The United Nations must accelerate efforts in this area. The high-level review, as well as the reviews of peacebuilding architecture and peace operations, recommended new measures in this respect. While steps have been taken to act on these recommendations, including initiatives by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UN-Women, full implementation will require additional commitment to effecting partnerships. I call upon all entities to

further enhance coordination, build internal capacity for gender mainstreaming and analysis, and use comparative expertise on gender equality when responding to conflicts and crises. I also call upon Member States to extend increased support for these efforts.

112. **Financing the women and peace and security agenda.** Increased financial resources are necessary in order to meet commitments to the women and peace and security agenda. I welcome sustained financial support by Member States to organizations working on women and peace and security, and multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the new Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action. However, initiatives in this area continue to be dramatically underresourced, constraining the ability of the international community to meet the commitments made at the high-level review. United Nations entities also fall short in this area, with several showing a downward trend in allocations to gender equality. I call upon Member States, multilateral organizations and development banks to ensure robust financing of the women and peace and security agenda.

113. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places gender equality at the centre of sustainable development and highlights the connections between sustainable development and peaceful and inclusive societies. The World Humanitarian Summit emphasized the need for global leadership to prevent and end conflict, a core responsibility outlined in my Agenda for Humanity. Against this backdrop, I am calling upon Member States and the United Nations to redouble efforts to prevent conflict and to insist that gender equality be at the heart of every endeavour to establish a more peaceful world.

114. Prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in peace and security settings must remain a continued effort in the long term. I strongly encourage my successor to ensure that systems are in place for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda across the United Nations and I call upon Member States to ensure that commitments are backed with political, human and financial support.

United Nations S/2016/823

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 September 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 29 September 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, and further to our previous letters concerning the Jordanian regime's support for the armed terrorist groups that are active and have committed brutal terrorist acts in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, I should like to inform you that the Jordanian regime has facilitated the entry, through a number of border crossings, of trucks carrying weapons destined for armed terrorist groups.

- At 1045 hours on 16 August 2016, armed terrorist groups brought eight containers from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing and headed towards the Sawhat Abu Sharshuh area to the north.
- At 2040 hours on 16 August 2016, armed terrorist groups brought four containers from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing and headed towards the Rusay'i well in the Suwayda' desert.
- At 2030 hours on 21 August 2016, armed terrorist groups brought three containers from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing and headed towards the Rusay'i well in the Suwayda' desert.
- At 2015 hours on 27 August 2016, armed terrorist groups brought 10 containers from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing and headed towards the Rusay'i well in the Suwayda' desert.
- At 1330 hours on 8 September 2016, armed terrorist groups brought three large trucks from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing and headed towards the Rusay'i well in the Suwayda' desert, and then on to the area of the Na'amah well.
- At 1945 hours on 24 September 2016, armed terrorist groups brought eight containers from Jordan into Syria via the Abu Sharshuh border crossing and nine containers via the Ruwayshid border crossing.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the conduct of the Jordanian regime and the direct support that it provides to terrorist groups in Syria is a blatant violation of the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter and Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism, including

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resolutions 1267 (1999), 1373 (2001), 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), which reaffirm that States Members of the United Nations must not provide any form of support to terrorist groups or the members thereof.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibilities and compel the Jordanian regime to desist from its practices, which threaten security and stability in the region and throughout the world.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative